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THE SPIRIT OF THE DOMINICAN  
ORDER



# THE SPIRIT OF THE DOMINICAN ORDER

ILLUSTRATED FROM THE  
LIVES OF ITS SAINTS

BY

MOTHER FRANCES RAPHAEL, O.S.D.

(AUGUSTA THEODOSIA DRANE)

OF THE ENGLISH CONGREGATION OF ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA, STONE

WITH INTRODUCTION BY THE  
VERY REV. FATHER JOHN PROCTER  
PROVINCIAL OF THE ENGLISH DOMINICANS

SECOND EDITION

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### PROTESTATION.

IN obedience to the decrees of Urban VIII. of March 13, 1625, and July 5, 1634, we declare that, when giving the title of Saint or Blessed to any persons of high virtue mentioned in these pages, or when speaking of miraculous and extraordinary deeds and events, we only do so in accordance with the usage of ordinary language, without meaning in any way to anticipate the judgment of Holy Church.





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## INTRODUCTION

IN justice to the gifted writer of the book to which these words are prefaced, the reader is asked to bear in mind that the work is a posthumous one—it appears two years after her death ; and also that it was not intended in the first instance for publication, having been written solely for the personal edification of her Sisters in religion. When urged in after years to publish it, Mother Frances Raphael hesitated and in the end through diffidence failed to do so. It was written for the most part in her early religious life, two years only after her profession, when many sources of Dominican information now available were as yet either undiscovered or at best little known. She always felt that for general reading it would have to be added to, re-arranged and almost entirely remodelled. In defence to the opinion of others, her spiritual children have now wisely decided to give these pages to the public, in the fullest confidence that as they have been to them so they will be to many souls, in the world as well as in the cloister, a signal of comfort and encouragement in difficulties and doubts, and a beacon-light to guide them helpfully and hopefully through many a dark storm. Knowing the mind of their Mother, they have endeavoured to carry out her will ; they have verified quotations ; and they have made certain additions which, had she lived to revise the work for the press, the author had in contemplation. Chapters have been transposed, and the

sequence of subjects has in some instances been changed from the one followed in the original manuscript, which bears the date 1855.

With these explanations the reader will understand why the examples in which the volume so richly abounds are not invariably authenticated, why references are not given, why parts of the book bear the traces of another pen, and why the dates of the birth and death of those referred to have been added by another hand, whenever it has been possible to ascertain them.\* It was not intended—nor is it now—that the incidents of Dominican family life, recorded in the spirit of childlike faith, should be committed to critical analysis, or be subjected to the ruthless dissecting knife of the incredulous student of history whose *métier* it is to cut away and reject as a useless if not dangerous excrescence all that does not clearly enter into the sinew and muscle and bone of the verified system of unassailable historical facts. The book must be read as it was written,

“ With pure eyes and Christian hearts.”

To describe “ the Spirit ” of an Order is a task of no little difficulty : it is to explain that which is neither palpable, tangible, nor visible ; it is to picture the unseen. No one but a member of an Order can understand, much less reveal to others, the Order’s Spirit ; it presupposes not book-learning but practical life-study, it is a “ drawing from life.” “ What man knoweth the things of a man but the spirit of a man that is in him ? ” † The late Archbishop Ullathorne was accustomed to say that “ to understand is

\* When only one date is given, it refers to the year of the death.

† 1 Cor. ii. 11.

to stand under." To understand the spirit of a life one must stand or live under it. To explain that spirit to an outsider, it must be embodied in the life of the Founder or in the lives of its most illustrious members. The daily life, the daily practices, the daily work, the daily devotions, the daily following of traditional as well as constitutional exercises, the daily association with those who have borne the yoke from their youth and have grown old in the service—these alone can reveal what we mean by the spirit of an Order, these alone can make known to us the *inner self* of a religious life. The writer of the following pages, having herself imbibed the spirit of the Dominican Order in her Dominican home, saw the wisdom of embodying its spirit in the living instances of some of its sainted members. From her graceful and prolific pen we have the Dominican spirit revealed in the Life of the Founder of the Order;\* then she manifests that spirit in his best known and most illustrious daughter, the seraph Saint of Siena;† now she shows us the likeness of the Father and the reflection of his spirit in many others, his spiritual children. The title of the present work suggests its scope and object: "The Spirit of the Dominican Order illustrated in the Lives of its Saints." The spirit is explained not so much in words as by the more emphatic teaching of example. The book is an object lesson in Dominican life. It is a Dominican gallery containing pictures familiar and pictures new. It is a mirror reflecting Dominican ways; a photograph portraying the lines, the lineaments, the expression of the

\* *History of St. Dominic.* † *History of St. Catharine of Siena.*

Dominican face ; a phonograph reproducing Dominican words and sayings coming from the abundance of the Dominican heart and therefore revealing the Dominican spirit.

Every Order has its own peculiar spirit, different in some degree at least from the spirit of every other Order, hence its *raison d'être*. If all were alike one would suffice for the different characters of men and the varying needs of Christian society. All are not alike, they agree in the first broad principles of religious life ; in all else they agree too—but they agree to differ—to differ that is in their mode of carrying out these principles among men. As flower differs from flower, and leaf from leaf, and as every man has his own identity, so with Orders ; yet all work with the same great aim.

“ The universal cause  
Acts to one end but acts by various laws.”

The spirit of an Order to be studied *au fond* must be traced first to its Founder from whom it has its being, then must it be seen realised in the lives of its faithful members. As the likeness of the father is upon the child, and as the child inherits his character, his genius, his spirit from the parents, so a religious Order is the reflection of its Founder's spirit and mind, and is destined to carry out the life-work of him whose name is its proud inheritance. The dignified stability of the Benedictine is an heirloom from St. Benedict, the Patriarch of the western monks, and speaks to us of Subiaco and Monte Cassino ; the stern rigid poverty of the Franciscan had its origin in the rude detachment of the Poor Man of Assisi ; the martial spirit of the Jesuit,

always to the front in the battles of the Lord, comes from Ignatius the Soldier Saint. So the true spirit of the Dominican Order must be the inheritance from St. Dominic, and must be studied, if it is to be known at all, in the lives of the holiest of his children. This is the key-note to the pages which are now introduced to the reader.

The poet-theologian of Italy who received so much of his inspiration from the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, has "caught" the Spirit of St. Dominic and has summarized the "double spirit" of his Order.

" And I speak of him as the labourer  
Whom Christ in His own garden chose to be  
His helpmate. Messenger he seem'd and friend,  
Fast knit to Christ ; and the first love he show'd,  
Was after the first counsel that Christ gave him.

\* \* \* \* \*

" Then with sage doctrine and good will to the help,  
Forth on his great apostleship he fared,  
Like torrent bursting from a lofty vein ;  
And dashing 'gainst the stocks of heresy,  
Smote fiercest where resistance was most stout."\*

The Dominican spirit as exemplified in Dominic was the "double spirit" of contemplation and action, the blending of the active life of the apostle with the cloistered life of the monk. He was "messenger and friend," he was "fast knit to Christ," and yet "forth on his great apostleship he fared," and he "smote fiercest where resistance was most stout." He was a man of prayer, to whom prayer was as the breath of his nostrils,

\* Dante, *Paradiso* xii.

as the blood which coursed in his veins, as the soul of his life, and as the life of his very soul. He was a man of the interior life, who, like Abraham, "walked with God," "never speaking but of God or to God." He was a man of deep humility, "the first in holiness and the last in his own esteem," as the writer of his life puts it so pithily and yet so well. He was a man of rude hard penance, whose life was an unceasing conflict with nature, to which he gave neither rest nor peace; sleeping (if he slept at all) on the floor of the sanctuary with a stone step for his pillow, disciplining himself to blood three times each night, fasting long and fasting rigorously, poorly clad and poorly fed and poorly lodged, dying to self that he might live to God. He was a man of mercy who, though he hated sin, yet like his Divine Master loved the sinner and prayed that he "might be used as a stone to block up the mouth of hell that no more poor souls might fall therein," and who in his sleep was heard to murmur: "What will become of sinners?" He was a man of gentleness, despite all that has been written in calumny against him, who sold his books to feed the needy and would have sold himself to ransom a slave. That was his inner life. But united to this in holy wedlock was the life of the apostolate, that life of which St. Catharine of Siena, his spiritual daughter, writes in her Dialogue: "He took on him the office of the Word, the only-begotten Son of God, and appeared in the world as an apostle scattering the darkness of error and giving light;" and



of which his successor and biographer, Blessed Jordan, says: "He preached by day and by night, in the houses, in the fields, and by the roadsides." Like his Divine Master again *pertransivit benefaciendo*—he went about doing good, never wearying, never flagging, never faltering, never failing in the work for souls, winning the faithful, convincing and converting the faithless.

"The hallowed wrestler, gentle to his own  
And to his enemies terrible."

This is the double spirit we look for—and we shall not look in vain—in the present work of Mother Frances Raphael; we shall find it "exemplified in the lives" of St. Dominic's sainted Children, the inheritance from their saintly Father.

The spirit of the Dominican Order as we glean it from the lives alike of Father and Children may be summarized in the words of the Dominican Constitutions: "Our Order was specially instituted from the beginning for the work of preaching and the salvation of souls, and all our endeavours must tend to this that we may be of help to the souls of others."\* Again in the Acts of Bologna which form part of the process of St. Dominic's canonization a single sentence expresses the idea of the heritage bequeathed to his Children: "He seemed wholly absorbed," says one of the witnesses, "in saving souls, by all means and as many as he could." His fifth successor in the headship of the Order, Blessed Humbert, in the same spirit

\* Const. prolog. text. 3.

addresses his brethren: "Let us offer ourselves with joy in every kind of labour for the salvation of souls and the greater glory of God." The good of souls is the end for which the Order was founded, and to this end everything else was to serve as a means. When the means ceased to be a means and became a hindrance or an obstacle, it was for the time being to be suppressed. The large dispensing power in the hands of superiors, not only may, but must be used when external observances impede the work for souls. In the Dominican life the active work for souls is to be united to the life of contemplation, daily mental prayer, the choral recitation of the Divine Office, including the weekly Office of the Dead, community life, conventual observances, monastic penances, fasting and abstinence, silence at stated times and in certain places, early rising, and the observance of the triple vow. This is Dominican life, but through it all must run as the woof through the woven web the great principle which is the soul of the life: "the salvation of souls." Zeal for souls must be the dominant note of the Dominican life-song; anything which jars upon that note must be treated as a discord even though it be one of the prescribed means. The fasting, the abstinence, the choral duty, these are most holy, most helpful, most salutary means, but still means, the salvation of souls being the end. If the fasting, or the abstinence, or the choir, under peculiar circumstances, hinders instead of helps in the work for souls the dispensing power comes in, the discord is suppressed,

the dominant note prevails, and the harmony of Dominican life and spirit is restored. The Rule which ordains the external observance, prescribes at the same time the dispensation when the observance interferes with work for souls, so that legitimate dispensation is not relaxation but rule.

It is ignorance of these principles of religious life in the older Orders that makes critics tell us that the ancient Orders are effete, that their day has gone, that they have done their work, and that theirs is a dead though glorious past. This was not Lacordaire's conclusion. He had studied religious life in its every phase with the practical intention of embracing it, and his judgment was: "Oaks and monks are immortal!" Then speaking of the Order to which he dedicated his life and which he revived in his native France, he added: "Even were God to give us the power of creating a religious Order, we feel sure, after much reflection, that we could find nothing newer, nothing better adapted to our own time and to our own wants than the rule of St. Dominic. It has nothing ancient about it but its history, and we do not see any necessity of torturing our minds for the simple pleasure of dating from yesterday."\* The Church is older than the oldest Order, and the Church is still young. The old religious rules have an elasticity which enables their followers to stretch them legitimately without breaking them, and to accommodate them to all times, all

\* *Memorial for the Re-establishment in France of the Friars-Preachers*, p. 47.

places, all sorts and conditions of men. The Decalogue has not changed with the ages, nor have the Beatitudes, nor yet the Counsels of Perfection. Men and women are as human in the nineteenth century as they were in the twelfth, the tenth, or the sixth; their passions are as strong, their needs as great, their natures still untamed. The laws of penance, obedience and prayer have not been abrogated, nor can they be. And, even though with the ages circumstances and conditions of life have changed, the rules of the older Orders have within them a power of adaptability which enables them to meet the requirements of habits and customs which six hundred years ago were not contemplated as being within the range of probable, perhaps not even possible contingencies. If at times or in places an Order fails to use this power, it is because its members lack what our author calls the "magnanimity" of their Founder; their views are warped, their ideas narrowed; they are short-sighted, they are neither large-minded nor large-hearted. "Oaks and monks are immortal"—therefore there is life in the oak and there is life in the monk. Life means power, and power only calls for a field for the display of its energy and pent-up force. The power that made the rules in the old Orders is not dead, it still lives within them; and the power which made can modify, can accommodate to the exigencies of time and place, and can even unmake, if needs be, that which itself has made. It is only when the legislative body of an Order fails to realize this that the Order merits the reproach of being effete

and barren, and its glories of being those of a dead past. The immortal oak must continue to send forth new shoots, new leaves, new fruit as the years go by; the monk to be immortal and to prove his immortality must not rest upon memories that are of the past, he must live in the ever-passing present. "Therefore every scribe, instructed in the Kingdom of God, is like to a master of a house, who bringeth forth from his treasure new things and old."\*

The reader of the chapters to which the present writer has been asked to prefix these words will not fail to see, as he reads, the adaptability of the Dominican rule and spirit to the many and varied needs of the Christian and religious world. It is said of the teaching of St. Thomas that it is *Aplissima ad omnium temporum errores pervincendos*—"always equal to the refutation of errors of all times;"† so may we say of the Dominican Rule which he followed, that, though ancient, it is ever new and suited to times and places which, when it was promulgated, were not even in contemplation.

The Order has a triple organization, so that within its ample fold may be found souls the most active, souls the most contemplative, souls that vied with St. Bruno, and souls who were fired with the zeal—the active zeal—of St. Francis Xavier. They, like their Father and Guide, were absorbed, "wholly absorbed in saving souls by all means, and as many as they could;" they "offered themselves with joy in every kind of labour

\* Matt. xiii. 52.

† Breviary Lesson, 2 Nocturn.

for the salvation of souls and the greater glory of God ;" their motto being *Omnia ad animarum salutem*—"We must do everything to gain souls." This Dominican apostolate has been Catholic in time, in place, in variety of work, this Catholic spirit of universal charity being an heirloom from St. Dominic.

"Thence many rivulets have since been turn'd,  
Over the garden Catholic to lead  
Their living waters, and have fed its plants."

St. Thomas Aquinas, who taught in the schools and wrote in his humble cell books which form the limpid and exhaustless source from which later theologians have been proud to draw; Blessed Albert, who even in his lifetime was surnamed "the Great"—"great in wisdom, great in science, greatest in natural knowledge;" St. Vincent Ferrer, who is represented in art as the Angel of the Apocalypse, and who as an apostle travelled throughout Europe and perhaps landed on our English and Irish shores; St. Catharine of Siena, who is known as "the Seraphic Virgin" and yet who was the most active of Saints, who bore the sacred stigmata and yet was instrumental in the providence of God in putting an end to the seventy years' schism and prevailing upon the Pope (Gregory XI.) to return from Avignon to Rome; St. Raymund of Pennafort, the counsellor of kings and the Canonist of the Church; St. Rose of Lima, the first canonized Saint of the new world; St. Pius V., the reforming Pontiff; Blessed Imelda, the child-saint and the patron of First Communicants; St. Lewis Bertrand, "the Xavier of the

West," the Evangelist precursor of St. Peter Claver amongst the savage tribes of South America, who in three years is said to have converted ten thousand people; Blessed James of Ulm, who painted on glass and so preached the gospel of Christ and appealed through the eye to the heart; St. John of Cologne, who in the sixteenth century was a parish priest in Holland, and who shed his blood in defence of the two crucial doctrines, "the rocks of scandal," upon which the so-called Reformers were then making shipwreck of their faith, viz., the Blessed Sacrament and the Papal Supremacy; St. Antoninus, the model Archbishop of Florence; Bartholomew de Las Casas, who in the days of Columbus sang the first High Mass ever heard in the New World, and who devoted his life to the service of the Indians, several times crossing the seas to plead their cause before the king of Spain and so obtain their freedom; the artist friends and brothers in religion, Fra Angelico da Fiesole and Fra Bartolomeo della Porta, and many others mentioned by Marchese,\* whose sermons on canvas and frescoed walls are eloquent beyond words even to our own time; Savonarola, the intrepid preacher and for years the virtual ruler of Florence, "whom an ungrateful people vainly burnt alive, since his virtue and glory have risen higher than the flames of his funeral pile;" Blessed Villana, the Florentine widow; Bartholomew of the Martyrs,† the primate of Portugal, the friend and adviser of St. Charles Borromeo, one of the most exemplary of the

\* *Lives of the Dominican Painters and Sculptors.*

† See his Life by Lady Herbert.

Fathers at the Council of Trent ; Blessed Henry Suso, the most human of men and yet the most ascetic of Saints ; Blessed Sybillina and Blessed Margaret of Castello, who, though blind, saw God and worshipped Him "in spirit and in truth ;" Blessed John Dominic, Cardinal of Saint Sixtus, the ecclesiastical reformer who aided so greatly in extinguishing the great Schism of the West ; St. Peter Martyr, "the hammer of the heretics," who as he died wrote *Credo* with his blood on the ground ; Robert Kilwardby, who in the thirteenth century was made Archbishop of Canterbury and afterwards became Cardinal—all these, and many others whom this book will introduce to the reader (to some readers probably for the first time), were true Dominicans, loyal children of St. Dominic, chivalrous followers of his rule, earnest and fervent exponents of the Dominican spirit. And yet how varied their work, how different their sphere of action, how Catholic in time, in place, in labour their apostolate ! This is what we mean by the adaptability of the Dominican spirit and rule to the varied needs and characters of men. This is the gloss on the text *Omnia ad animarum salutem*. "Let us offer ourselves with joy in every kind of labour for the salvation of souls and the greater glory of God." "What then ? so that every way, whether by occasion or by truth, Christ be preached ; in this also I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."\*

The triple organization of the Order to which we have alluded opens a large field for the Dominican

\* *Phil.* i. 18.



apostolate. Some of those whose sayings and doings are recorded in these pages belonged to the First, sometimes called the Great Order, which comprises the Fathers, the students and lay-brothers living in community under the three solemn vows. The lay-brothers, such as Blessed James of Ulm and Blessed Martin of Porres, of whom Lima is so justly proud, and of both of whom beautiful stories are told, combine manual labour and prayer, mindful ever that *laborare est orare*, that work can be made a prayer, and that both are to be offered to God for "the salvation of souls." The novices and students prepare by prayer, religious discipline, monastic observances and study for the future life as apostles, for the axiom is true both in the spiritual and moral as well as in the physical and intellectual world, *Prius est lucere quam illuminare*, "We must receive light before we can diffuse it." Study, prayer, discipline and conventual life have all to be again a sacrifice for "the salvation of souls." The Fathers are the apostles of the Order, but contemplative as well as active apostles. The true idea of Dominican life as illustrated in the lives of its Saints is to teach and preach and hear confessions and participate in every good work for the salvation of souls and the glory of God; and then to return to the cloister to study and pray and take part in conventual life, and so to refresh both mind and heart and prepare for future work. The union of action and contemplation, the blending of the two to the prejudice of neither, is the *beau-idéal* of the Dominican.

Some again whose pictures are drawn in this little volume were members of the Second or Cloistered Order, which consists of women only, for St. Dominic never wished the First Order to be other than a society of active apostolic men. The members of the Second Order, in reality St. Dominic's first-born children, exemplify the Dominican spirit in another way, by an austere life of vigil, work and contemplation. They, as Moses, on the mountain, with uplifted hands pray for the success of those who battle for God on the plain. Theirs is "the better part" of Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, pleading for those busied about much serving, "that they who serve and they who are served whilst troubled about many things" may not forget the "one thing necessary." Hidden from the world in life-long cloistered homes, these daughters of St. Dominic pray for the world; unknown to men they offer daily penance and daily—yes, and nightly—supplication for men's salvation.

The greater number, however, of the heroes and heroines of sanctity to whose heroism these chapters bear witness belonged to what is known as the Third Order of St. Dominic. The Third Order was originally intended by the great Patriarch as a military institute and bore the name of "the Militia of Jesus Christ," but after his death, changing somewhat its spirit, it changed its name and was better known as "the Third Order of Penance of St. Dominic." It is a large organization embracing both sexes in every variety of religious life, from the secular Tertiaries living a married or unmarried life in the world, to the cloistered (though not enclosed) communities

binding themselves to the choral recitation of either the Divine Office or the Little Office of our Lady, certain fasts, abstinences and penances, and the other obligations of conventual life. The various congregations of conventual Tertiaries supplement the Rule of the Third Order, which for communities is somewhat vague and meagre, by constitutions drawn from those of the First and Second Orders. In the Third Order we come back to the active life still informed by the spirit of contemplation, action in contemplation and contemplation in action. As the reader will gather from the book which is now offered to him, though some congregations of conventual tertiaries confine themselves to a specific sphere of work, such as teaching and instructing and duties which do not take them from their convent homes, the active work of the Third Order as an Order is not limited to a groove ; theirs is a large and almost unlimited field. The members offer themselves " with joy in every kind of labour for the salvation of souls and the glory of God." Teaching in schools whether elementary or for the higher classes, nursing the sick either in hospitals or in their homes, reclaiming the prodigals and the Magdalens, training fatherless and motherless orphans, taking care of lepers and the plague-stricken — all these form part of the work of the Third Order, a work which they have done in the past ; a work which both at home and beyond many seas they are still doing with devotion to-day. But with all and in all—for we speak now of the conventual Third Order and not of the larger branch of those living a life of edification in the world—to active work must be joined contempla-

tion, the choral office, daily meditation, vocal as well as mental prayer, the Conventual Mass, devotion to Mary, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, the sacred source of "spirit and life."

This then is the triple Dominican life whose "true spirit" will be found in the following pages "illustrated in the lives of its Saints." May this little book, whose author's name is sufficient guarantee for its value and sterling worth, be of help—and we feel assured that it will be—to many souls in other cloisters as well as in Dominican homes, and to many more who though living in the world are not of the world, and who like St. Catharine, having no convent home, have made "a cell in their hearts" in which they can converse with Him whom their soul loves. May they be drawn to the spirit, if they cannot practise the letter of the virtues which are the "ground-work of Dominican sanctity." May they grow in the love of the devotions which Dominic loved and Dominicans still love—devotion to the Blessed Sacrament the centre of holiness and spiritual life, devotion to the Holy Name from which alone salvation can come to men, devotion to the Divine Mother who is our Mother as well, devotion to the suffering souls who if helped by us now will help us hereafter before the Eternal Throne.

"Christi pia gratia sanctos sublimavit,  
Quos Patris Dominici ordo propagavit;  
Nos eorum meritis petimus juvari,  
Atque suis precibus Deo commendari."

JOHN PROCTER, O.P.

ST. DOMINIC'S PRIORY, LONDON, N.W.

*Feast of St. Dominic, August 4, 1896.*

# THE SPIRIT OF THE ORDER OF ST. DOMINIC

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## PART I THE GROUNDWORK OF DOMINICAN SANCTITY

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### CHAPTER I

#### THE OBJECT FOR WHICH THE ORDER WAS INSTITUTED

WE find in the Acts of the canonization of St. Dominic a single sentence which perfectly expresses the idea of that zeal which was the heritage bequeathed to his children by the Founder of the Friar Preachers. "He seemed wholly absorbed," says one of the witnesses of Bologna, "in the salvation of souls, by all means and as many as he could." His faithful daughter, our Seraphic Mother, St. Catharine of Siena, is recorded to have said to her confessor, Blessed Raymond: "Oh, Father, could you but know the beauty of one immortal soul, you would think it little to give your life a hundred times over for its salvation."

Accordingly, throughout every succeeding age, the followers of St. Dominic and St. Catharine have kept closely in their footsteps; and no better account can be given of their labours than to say, they have sought

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the salvation of souls "by all means and as many as they could."

Our Constitutions teach us that, "as the Fathers devote themselves to the office of preaching, for which, as its name implies, the Order was expressly founded, so the religious women who follow the same holy rule, should aim at advancing the salvation of souls, both by their prayers and by such active works of charity as may be embraced by their particular Institute;" and again: "It is most necessary that those who devote themselves to a work so sublime and holy should before all things labour at their own sanctification, so that they may become fit instruments for the sanctification of others."

To save souls, then, first our own, and then "as many others as possible and by every means in our power," is the object set before us; and it is to be accomplished "by prayer and by active works of charity." Here we see at once the twofold character of the Dominican Order, its mingling of action with contemplation. In the following pages it will be our aim to illustrate and foster this "double spirit" by examples drawn from the lives of our Saints, calling to mind the words of St. John Chrysostom in the Lessons for the Feast of All Saints of our Order:—"Let him who with religious veneration contemplates the merits of the Saints and celebrates the glories of the just by frequent praises, imitate their holy ways and their justice; for he who takes delight in the merit of any Saint, should take delight also in rendering like service to God. Either he ought to imitate him whom he praises, or he ought not to praise him whom he hesitates to imitate. He who praises another ought to make himself praiseworthy; and he who admires the merits of the Saints ought himself to become

admirable by his holiness of life. For, if we love just and faithful souls, because we see in them faith and justice, we can also become what they are, if we do what they do. . . . These are the footprints which the Saints, journeying to their true country, have left behind for our guidance ; that, keeping to their paths, we may follow them into eternal joys."

The vast variety of labours undertaken by the apostolic missionaries of the Order would, of course, furnish abundant illustration of its manifold work for souls ; but, these labours being necessarily of a very different kind from such as are within our own reach, we shall in the following pages select our examples for the most part from the lives of our Sisters, so far as regards the active work which lies within the scope of our Institute, and which is, as will be seen, of a most diversified nature.

At the same time, there is another feature in the character of our Order and of its Saints which equally calls for attention. It is not, as we know, a purely active Order ; it never lays aside its contemplative spirit ; nay, among its holiest and most distinguished members, the most active have ever been the most contemplative. Père de Réchac concludes his Lives of the saintly women of the Order by a kind of summary ; and there is something truly astonishing in the long list he gives of the extraordinary favours granted to our Sisters, including several instances of the impression of the sacred Stigmata and of the Crown of Thorns and other privileges, never accorded save to souls who have been raised to a very high degree of prayer. Yet many of the recipients of these favours, such as our Seraphic Mother St. Catharine (A.D. 1347-1380), St. Rose (A.D. 1586-1617), Blessed Benvenuta (A.D. 1254-1292), Blessed Stephana (A.D. 1457-

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1530), the Venerable Maria Raggi (A.D. 1552-1600), and others, were not cloistered nuns, but Tertiaries living in the world, actively working in it, mixed up with its sins and sufferings, praying in the public churches, and without any of the advantages of religious enclosure.

It is, therefore, quite evident that the Dominican Saints had somehow or other found the secret how to work without distraction, and to lead a life of supernatural contemplation all the time that they were busied in apostolic labours. They made an enclosure of their own, and, like St. Catharine, never departed from a secret cell they had built within their hearts. If then we are to consider the spirit of the Order, apart from its mere Rule, in the lives of its Saints, this mingling of action and contemplation must naturally form our principal subject. We shall see, first, a quenchless zeal for souls and the most entire self-sacrifice in their pursuit, working in an infinite variety of ways and with a wonderfully "free and joyous" spirit, as St. Catharine remarks; next, an abiding spirit of prayer, which often made the activity of a Dominican half contemplative, just as his contemplation was never quite inactive. Moreover, we notice a certain distinctive loftiness and magnanimity about our Saints, which is of the essentially heroic stamp, the highest expression of religious fortitude; and herein we detect a family likeness to St. Dominic, the very ideal of religious chivalry, and to St. Catharine, of whom nature would have made a heroine, if grace had not claimed her for a Saint.

Three things, therefore, present themselves in the foremost rank for us to imitate in their examples—zeal for souls, a life of prayer, and greatness of heart and purpose. The first of these may be treated under the head of



active work, whether spiritual or corporal, for the service of our neighbour ; the second, as the contemplative character of the Order ; and the third suggests something of the manner in which the active work was undertaken and accomplished. It will be natural in the next place to consider the subject of regular observance and the practice of the vows ; and the briefest notice of the spirit of the Order would be incomplete indeed, did it not make some mention of penance, so distinguishing a feature of Dominican life as actually to give its name to one branch of the Order, the Brethren and Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic. This will complete our First Part, entitled " The Groundwork of Dominican Sanctity."

In our Second Part we shall speak of the four characteristic devotions of the Order as exemplified in the lives of its Saints ; whilst in the Third we shall endeavour to give a picture of Dominican life by gathering together some of the many beautiful traditions connected with our every-day duties and observances ; concluding with a few instances, chosen almost at random, of the happy deaths whereby God has been pleased to crown lives wholly devoted to His service.

## CHAPTER II

### ACTIVE WORK OF THE ORDER

THE circumstances under which the Order of Preachers was first instituted bear in some ways so close a resemblance to those of our own time and country as naturally to suggest a feeling of its fitness for the present day. It was to stay the ravages of heresy in Languedoc that St. Dominic gathered together his daughters at Prouille, and then formed the first community of his sons at Toulouse.

"It entered into the original design of our holy Patriarch," as our Constitutions tell us, "that the religious women of his Order should occupy themselves with the instruction of others in the faith, when this might be required by the necessities of time and place. In this spirit, therefore, we have embraced the work of teaching, which, in so far as it is profitable to the souls of others, is one of those which flow from the abundance of contemplation."

In the lives of our Saints we find ample evidence of the educational labours of the Sisters, especially of the Third Order, amongst the poor; not, of course, in the sense which we now attach to the word "educational," secular learning being neither called for nor needed among the lower orders of those times. But the religious instruction of the poor was one of the chief duties undertaken by the Sisters of the Third Order, and often even by the enclosed religious of the Second Order, so far as it was possible for them. We find Mary of Jesus (A.D. 1574-1616), the foundress of the Monastery of St. Catharine of

Siena at Toulouse, most exact in the discharge of this office so long as her convent remained unenclosed ; and after the more regular settlement of her establishment her zeal was not to be damped by the difficulties and hindrances incidental on religious enclosure. After the order for this was given, so that she could no longer, as before, receive the objects of her charity into the convent, she contrived to catechise them at the place arranged, as in other enclosed houses, for the distribution of alms.

Catharine of Herrera, a remarkable Spanish Tertiary (A.D. 1539-1616), was particularly devoted to this kind of work ; and the way in which she set about it was identical with that which presents itself to ourselves. The inhabitants of Toledo were in a state of fearful ignorance and disorder ; and Catharine, having collected some of the most neglected, made it her business to prepare them for Confession and send them to the Fathers. This gave rise to a considerable movement in the city ; and the Friars found such multitudes crowding to the confessional that they scarce knew how to dispose of them, especially as vast numbers of them had not practised their religious duties for years, and many had never confessed at all. It was necessary, therefore, to defer absolution till the penitents had been properly instructed, a task which devolved upon Catharine, and which she discharged with such zeal and devotion that she would address them on her knees and with tears streaming from her eyes. As she went on, she found the ignorance of the people so widespread and intense that her own unaided efforts were insufficient to remove it. With courageous simplicity she at once addressed herself to the Cardinal Archbishop, Don Bernard de Rochas, who received her courteously, but, scarcely entering into the state of the case, contented

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himself with saying that the instruction of the people was one of the duties of the parish priests, of which he would take occasion to remind them. Catharine, however, knew that the evil called for more energetic remedies, and succeeded so well in her representations that his Eminence at length put the matter into her hands and told her that any plan she decided on as best should be adopted. The result was the employment of thirty Brethren of the Third Order of St. Francis as catechists under her direction. Toledo soon became a very different place, as the ignorance which had formerly disgraced it gradually disappeared.

Catharine of Herrera may indeed be taken as a fair example of the universality of the Dominican spirit. It was all one to her what she did, so long as it was work for souls. If she met the sick in the streets, she would take them to the hospital or to her own house, and first see that they were prepared for the sacraments. Then too she was constantly in the prisons, and she had a special devotion to attending criminals under sentence of death. In the most infamous haunts of the city her person was known and respected ; she walked through them, crucifix in hand, in quest of souls ; and numberless were those whom she thus courageously sought out and rescued from destruction. Once she even went so far as to preach publicly in the streets against blasphemy—an action in which, however, we need hardly say, she is more to be admired than imitated. Nor was she indifferent to other ways of moving men to sorrow for their sins. She was at some pains and expense to procure the publication of religious books for distribution among the people ; and she equally called into requisition another kind of preaching, namely, the silent power of a church and altar

properly cared for. We read of the time she spent on the adornment of the images of our Lord and of the provision she made for His tabernacles and altars. When she had no more money to devote to these pious purposes, she would beg alms in the streets ; and she was particularly diligent in furnishing the chapels of prisons and hospitals, " being urged thereto," says her biographer, " by her zeal for souls ; for she judged that, not only by instruction and reproof, but by exterior motives also men are moved to interior devotion and to a respect for the holy mysteries of the Church."

A very beautiful portrait is left us of Sister Lucina Margaret of Soncino, an Italian Tertiary (A.D. 1430-1485), and one which so perfectly conveys the idea of that two-fold character of work and prayer which we desire to make apparent in these illustrations that we shall give the passage as it stands in her life. In the first place she was married and surrounded by domestic cares, and had to contend with all kinds of difficulties from a cruel and violent husband. After having provided for his comfort at home, she would retire to the church for long hours of prayer. She said Office and the Rosary every day, communicated thrice in the week and sometimes daily, and often the Blessed Sacrament formed her only nourishment. To the prayer of Magdalen she joined the exercises of Martha. She visited the hospitals and prisons, gave pious exhortations to their inmates, and begged alms for their relief and for the payment of their debts. She made her way into the dungeons of even the worst criminals, many of whom, moved by her words, made a very holy end on the scaffold. In like manner she was to be found by the pillow of the agonising, with sweet words chasing away the temptations of the evil one and filling them with loving

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confidence in God ; and, when they had died, she laid out their bodies for burial with her own hands. Wherever she heard of affliction, whether among rich or poor, she hastened to its relief ; nor were spiritual necessities less the object of her solicitude than corporal needs. So untiringly did she pursue her work for souls, that many whom she converted acknowledged her as their spiritual mother, who had begotten them to the life of grace.

Indeed it never seemed to strike the Saints of the Dominican Order that contact with the sinful was to be avoided from an instinct of self-preservation. Their antidote against the corruption of the world was prayer ; its influence, pervading every thought and every act, was a security greater than could be afforded by any cloistered seclusion.

The life of Agatha of the Cross (A.D. 1547-1621) is full of instances of this fearlessness of a holy soul in the midst of vice. She seemed to live among sinners ; and it would be hard to say whether she laboured for their conversion most effectually by her exhortations or by the prayers and penances she perseveringly offered on their behalf. Nor was she without taking part also in the work of instruction, which seems more particularly to belong to the Order. By the express command of her Superiors she was charged with the care of a number of children, whose education she entirely conducted ; and a very interesting description is left us of her intercourse with her little pupils, of the tender maternal care she bestowed upon them, and of the confidence with which she inspired them ; so that they never committed the slightest fault without instantly acknowledging it to her. " Let us go and tell our Mother," was the customary saying amongst them on occasion of these transgressions.

Agatha's life was one of incessant labour. We find her teaching, nursing the sick, converting sinners, visiting prisoners. Spain was filled with the sweet odour of her virtues ; and it is said that she saved souls in every place she visited. And, as if to show that a soul who devotes herself to serve God in the apostolic life must be ready for any kind of work to which He may call her, it pleased her Divine Spouse at one time to withdraw her from her community and her work among the poor, and to oblige her by command of her Superiors to follow the Court in the suite of the governess of the royal princesses ; so that we may safely say there was no kind of life in which it was possible to benefit souls in which she was not, at one time or other, placed. And at what sacrifice to herself ! She had just retired, by order of the Provincial, to the Convent of St. Catharine of Siena of the Third Order at Madrid, and was beginning to taste the sweets of solitude and of community life after many years of trouble and laborious exertion, when obedience thus withdrew her from her sanctuary and compelled her to take up her abode in the household of a great lady of the Court. No position could have been less in accordance with her wishes or inclinations. "When it was notified to her by the Prior Provincial that it was the will of God that she should follow the Court in the train of Madame Antoinette, she obeyed," we are told, "with no little repugnance ;" yet, in all these changes, she never laid aside her life of rigorous penance and fervent prayer. Every one who came near her felt the influence of her angelic conversation ; for she succeeded in inducing people to undertake many good works ; and, inasmuch as the poor always flocked about her on account of the singular gift she

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had for dealing with them, the alms which the great ladies of the Court were persuaded to give passed through her hands. In fact, Agatha was as much in her place at the Court of Madrid as she had been in the dens of infamy at Toledo ; and for the simple reason that her place, and the place of all who are called to the apostolic course, was to follow Christ whithersoever He should lead, and wherever there were souls to save, whether of nobles or of beggars.

Mary of Jesus, of whose life within her convent walls we have already spoken, gave another example, whilst yet a secular Tertiary, of this readiness to sacrifice all private repugnance in the pursuit of souls. Her courage in penetrating into the most abandoned districts of Toulouse, and the singular influence she obtained over the violent and unmanageable inmates of the Home for Penitents which she had founded in that city, are familiar to all who are acquainted with her life. So too are her labours in the hospitals, for the sufferings of others of all kinds, whether of body or of soul, were alike embraced in that large and comprehensive charity whose motto may be said to have been, " Glory to God and good will to man," for other limits it had none.

Of Maria Raggi it is said that her charity to her neighbour showed itself in what may be termed an excess ; she would have sold herself to help the poor. Countless were the souls whom she saved in those streets of Rome which were blessed by her presence and the ministrations of her charitable zeal ; yet, as we shall have occasion to show, her supernatural life of prayer was one of the very highest order.

Magdalen de Redon, a secular Tertiary of Toulouse, who died A.D. 1627, performed the daily duties of a



hospital nurse with most heroic devotion. "Yet all this," says her biographer, "was nothing to her solicitude for the spiritual needs of the poor. Everywhere she was hailed among them as their angel and as a preacher sent from heaven. She might be seen surrounded by them, teaching them the catechism, preparing them for confession, instructing them how to pray or to communicate; and she did this wherever she might be, in the streets, the churches, the hospitals, the prisons, as well as in her own house. When she went into the country, her charity allowed her no repose. From the excessive ignorance which existed in the rural district surrounding her country-house, a custom had arisen among the people of leaving the church immediately after the Elevation, as if Mass were then ended. Magdalen resolved to put an end to this abuse; and, placing herself at the church-door, she stopped them as they came out and remonstrated with such sweetness and simplicity against the habit into which they had fallen that she effectually brought about the much-desired change." The zeal for souls which incessantly consumed her gave her a special devotion and courage in rescuing those of her own sex from public sin. She fearlessly sought out these unhappy beings at their own homes, and exhorted them to repentance. In these expeditions she had often much to suffer. Some of the most abandoned would insult and strike her; but many were reclaimed. If she were refused entrance into the house, she would meekly take up her stand upon the threshold and wait, till her patience overcame all obstacles.

But these examples, it may be said, are those of persons living in the world, without the restraints of community-

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life ; and it is natural for us to look for works of active charity among such, which would be impossible to religious. We will, therefore, see what was the spirit and practice of the most strictly enclosed of our nuns ; and these, whilst their labours were necessarily limited by their circumstances, have nevertheless left sufficient evidence of what they deemed the active duties of their state. Blessed Clara of Pisa (A.D. 1362-1420) was a contemporary and friend of St. Catharine of Siena, and the foundress of an enclosed convent of the Second Order of unusual strictness and severity of rule. The religious were only allowed to see their parents twice after their entrance, and the Constitutions were enforced to the letter. Nevertheless, although thus raised up, as it seemed, for the reform and preservation of the religious spirit in the strictest enclosure, Clara found means to extend her influence far beyond the limits of her convent walls. Unable to undertake active works of charity in person, she employed a number of out-sisters, who visited the hospitals and prisons, acting entirely under her direction. Moreover, she set on foot a system for the reception and education of foundlings, and succeeded in engaging several seculars to take part in this excellent work by undertaking the care of these poor children ; and she renounced, in favour of the institution she had succeeded in founding for them, a considerable property which had been bequeathed to her community.

“ What have you done to-day for the salvation of souls ? ” was the question with which Mary of Jesus usually saluted her daughters ; “ for,” says her biographer, “ she richly inherited the twofold spirit of St. Dominic,” and introduced into her convent the practice that every Sister should strive to gain three souls to God, one from

the flames of purgatory, one from the state of sin, and one from the world to the cloister. Very often her community would fast on bread and water in order to give their dinner to the poor ; and the enclosure, which was rigidly observed, did not prevent the venerable Superioress from superintending an extensive system of charity, so that the convent was always the refuge of those who were in need.

The example of Magdalen Orsini (A.D. 1534-1605) is also remarkable. She was originally a Tertiary ; but, desirous of greater perfection, she passed to the Second Order, and finally became the foundress of a reformed convent of very strict observance. Like Blessed Clara, however, she was in a lively manner sensible of the sufferings and necessities of the poor and particularly of orphans. Her exertions on behalf of some of these children exposed her to all sorts of calumnies. "What had a religious to do with such things?" it was said : "better that she should remain in her cell, than that she should busy herself with such worldly matters, which destroyed the spirit of recollection proper to her state." Nevertheless, we are told, "she did not desist from her enterprise, but offered to God the purity of her intention, and suffered men to speak as they would."

Those who could not work in other ways at least evidenced their zeal and sympathy by the great work of prayer. In the beautiful life of Sister Francesca Vacchini (A.D. 1589-1609), the young novice never professed but espoused to our Lord in a mystical and supernatural way, we read the following passage : "Those who would perfectly describe the extent of her charity need only say that, wherever misery reigned, there she was to be found. On earth and beneath

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the earth, in body or in soul, with her friends or her enemies, in prisons or in hospitals, everywhere she was present in spirit to aid sufferers by her prayers." Moreover, she had charge of the almsgiving of the community ; and, before her entrance into religion, she served in a plague-hospital for two years.

As we are speaking of the universality of the Dominican spirit, we are reminded of other ways in which the zeal of our Saints for God's glory and the salvation of souls has often been seen to work, besides those more obvious ones of the exterior works of charity. Amongst the religious men of the Order, as is well known, it has ever been the custom to cultivate every talent that could in any way conduce to the spread of religion ; this has likewise been the case among the Sisters of the Order, and to a greater degree than might be expected. Savonarola had disciples among the women, as among the men of his Order. Petronilla and Plautilla Nelli were two sisters who entered the Convent of St. Catharine at Florence somewhere about A.D. 1540. Both were women of genius and highly educated ; and both devoted all their talents to the service of God. Plautilla became an excellent artist, and the convent was filled with the productions of her pencil. But, more than this, the entire community gave themselves to the cultivation of the fine arts under her direction, and we have the names of seven nuns of this convent who attained singular excellence in painting. Others modelled in clay and produced what Razzi calls "very devout figures." Vasari's criticism on their productions is amusing : he says that these figures, though full of merit, nevertheless betrayed that they were the work, not only of women, but of nuns ! Some of these

paintings still decorate the altars of the Florentine churches. Again, St. Catharine de Ricci's convent at Prato was noted for its artists; and the paintings produced by the Sisters, specially their angels, were known through all Italy, and esteemed as well for their excellence as for the piety of those who had executed them.

Aurelia Fiorentini was a celebrated artist in the convent of Lucca. Her zeal for religion was as great as her genius and love of art, and overcame the most obstinate resistance on the part of her parents, who opposed her entrance into the cloister. In fact, the convents of Lucca were full of religious artists; and the choral books, beautifully illuminated by them, are still preserved.

But what is most to our purpose is that these things were done as religious acts and in a religious spirit. "The pictures of Bernardina Ruschi," says Father Razzi, "have been of the greatest benefit to her convent from their spiritual character." Of Plautilla Nelli it is said: "She was yet more eminent for holiness and prudence than for her paintings;" and another Sister, named Fieschi, a niece of St. Catharine of Genoa, is mentioned as renowned at once for sanctity and artistic genius. Evidently then it was the spirit of the Order to use and adapt this kind of talent wherever it existed.

Nor were these Genoese and Florentine religious excluded from the cultivation of even literary gifts. Petronilla, the sister of Plautilla, after the example of the Blessed Cecilia, became the biographer of her spiritual father, Savonarola. The manuscript edition of his life from her pen is said to be still preserved at Florence, and has served as the groundwork of many

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others. It has her own signature:—"Written by me, Sister Petronilla, a sinner. Devout reader, pray for me;" and, a little further down the page, a note by Plautilla, then Prioress, begging that the book may be cared for, for her sister's sake, who has passed to a better life; and again, further on, in another writing: "May God give glory to the two sisters, Plautilla, the painter and Prioress, and Petronilla, who wrote this history."

Lorenza Strozzi, one of St. Catharine de Ricci's subjects, was renowned for her beautiful Latin hymns and elegies; and Mother Villani of Naples (A.D. 1584-1670) is said to have rivalled St. Catharine in her profound works on mystical theology.

On the whole, it may safely be said that, whilst the religious women of the Order have in turn devoted themselves to every kind of active charity, serving the sick and poor in the lowest offices, they have at the same time ever cultivated that use of the intellectual and artistic powers in the service of God which was, from the first, a distinguished characteristic of the Order of Preachers. They have laboured to save souls "anyhow," and it was all one whether the work was to be on paper or on canvas, in the school, the hospital, the prison, or the homes of the poor. Marchese, after giving a long list of the female painters and authors of the Order, concludes in these words: "We might add many more, but these names are enough to reflect credit on our Order. The little we have said will prove that our Dominican nuns, in spite of many obstacles, have inherited all the taste bequeathed to the Institute by Angelico and Bartolomeo." It would even seem as if the cultivation of the arts had been specially encouraged

in our enclosed convents in the sixteenth century for the express purpose of enabling the Sisters to work for souls in one way when they could not do so in another. It is evident that something of the active spirit was fostered and approved of, even in such communities as that of St. Catharine de Ricci at Prato.

We may add that, much nearer our own times, Sister Anne Victoria Dolara acquired no little celebrity in Rome by her excellence in the hereditary art of her Order. Her paintings adorned the Church of St. Mary Magdalen on the Quirinal, where she was Prioress for many years. She died during the stormy period of the French occupation of Rome at the beginning of the present century ; and her *Complaint of the Roman Virgins*, a little poem in which she makes a touching appeal for the religious women and religious houses of the Eternal City, was published after her death.

But to return to the active spirit evinced by those of our Sisters whose lives were the most contemplative. We find much in the life of St. Catharine de Ricci (A.D. 1522-1590) which shows that she was as true a daughter of St. Dominic as her seraphic namesake of Siena. The regulations of community life imposed far greater restraints upon her ; yet we find her labouring no less for the conversion of all who came within her reach, and seldom without success. She had a wide circle of disciples of all classes. Young maidens, pious matrons, professional men, wealthy Florentine nobles, even Bishops, gloried in calling her by the name of Mother ; and she took a truly maternal interest in each one of them, as her letters amply testify. The poor were the objects of her special tenderness ; and she desired that they should always meet with a kind reception at the

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convent, no matter how importunate they might be. If the portress found herself unable to give them all they wanted, she was to give what she could and apologise for her inability to do more. "Manage," the Saint used to say, "that no poor person should ever leave the door without being comforted and relieved in some way or other." Regarding them as holding our Lord's place, she delighted in kneading with her own hands the bread which was intended for them. She was specially solicitous to obtain suitable dowries for destitute girls who desired to marry or to enter a convent; and her disciples, knowing her prudence and charity, constantly entrusted her with large sums to be distributed in alms.

One of the most liberal benefactors of the monastery lived without a thought of God. Catharine was unwearied in her admonitions to this man, who at length angrily bade her "go and spin; that's the work for nuns." After his conversion and happy death Catharine was wont to say playfully: "I thank God, he will know now whether I can spin or not." She was unable, like St. Catharine of Siena, to accompany criminals to the scaffold; yet many owed their conversion to her prayers; and once we are told, on the Feast of the Purification, the Blessed Virgin appeared to her and showed her a glorious sight—all the souls who had entered heaven by means of her prayers. These were the children whom God had given her.

Again the life of Blessed Catharine of Raconigi (A.D. 1486-1547), which presents a continual series of revelations and ecstasies, shows her to us at the same time in the exercise of all the works of mercy. Very beautiful stories occur, in the midst of the history of her prayer and contemplation, of the manner in which her charity to



others was rewarded by her Divine Spouse. Often He Himself appeared to her and received her alms in the person of His poor ; and sometimes she was clothed with beautiful garments in recompense for those which she had bestowed upon beggars. The sight of suffering afflicted her in an extraordinary degree ; she would carry poor children out of the cold streets to her room, and there clothe, wash, and warm them ; and on one such occasion our Lord came to her and crowned her with a wreath of white and red roses. Like St. Catharine of Siena, she often took off her own clothes to give them to others, saying she would rather be without clothes than without charity. In her quenchless zeal for souls she offered incessant prayer to God that He would shut the mouth of hell. She was even reproved for an undue zeal and a somewhat imperfect apprehension of the awful mysteries of God's justice ; for to her understanding it seemed that His glory was advanced only in proportion as more souls were saved ; and she was desired to remember that the glory of His justice was as great as that of His mercy. When she understood this, her prayer was changed into an ardent, almost impetuous, supplication that all the bolts of this mysterious justice might fall on herself alone ; and she was again told that her desire was neither possible nor reasonable. In all her colloquies with our Lord we see the same spirit of zeal for souls, outrunning reason and possibility, and everything but love. It was natural for such a mind to be drawn very powerfully to what may be called the work of charity proper to contemplatives, prayer for the souls in Purgatory. Her communications with them were constant and familiar ; and she was accustomed to make over to them all her good works. We have an exact idea of the manner in which action and

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contemplation were united in her, given us in the words of Father Seraphino Razzi, where he says: "Though she was gifted with such elevation of spirit through her frequent raptures, she was nevertheless very affable and gentle in her manners; and even while she worked with her hands, her mind made pilgrimages to Heaven. And when by reason of her poverty, she was compelled to practise weaving, she used with her clear and exalted understanding to read the book of nature, and by the help of visible things ascended to things heavenly and invisible."

Rosa Maria Giannini, a renowned Neapolitan Tertiary (A.D. 1670-1741), also presents us with a perfect example of the Dominican character. One might fancy the sketch left by her biographer, Pellegrino, to have been written with St. Catharine's remarks on the Order in his mind. "The servant of God was," he says, "of a gay and joyous disposition; and our Lord increased her natural affability and sweetness of manner, giving her special graces whereby she might gain the hearts of those with whom she had to deal. Ever with a smile on her lips, she would kindly and courteously adapt herself to the wants and humour of every one. With the permission of her Confessor numbers of persons went to seek her counsel in their difficulties; sometimes the mere sight of her was enough to relieve them of their anxieties. It is impossible to count all the souls whom she gained to God and advanced in the way of perfection. Men and women, nobles and plebeians, priests and religious, all crowded to her; and all went away better than they came." Political and secular matters, as well as the most abstruse questions of moral and dogmatic theology, were often laid before her; her acute and astonishing intellectual powers were well

known ; and her natural understanding, being marvelously assisted by the Holy Spirit, made people look to her for the solution of every kind of difficulty. The writer continues thus : " When God calls any person to any particular employment, He never fails to make such a one capable of exercising it. The servant of God, Rosa Maria Giannini, was placed in the midst of people of various characters and dispositions ; she had to heal wounded consciences and to speak to persons of evil and polluted life ; often to listen to details of the most revolting crimes, and to draw souls out of the grasp of the devil as it were by main force ; but through it all, as she acknowledged to her Confessor, she never lost the sense of the Divine presence ; and, while she listened to and grieved over the sins which were daily brought before her, the recital did but quicken her own charity ; nor, during the long years in which she was constantly employed in instructing, counselling and gaining souls, was her mind ever shadowed by so much as a passing remembrance which could disturb the peace and purity of her soul. Attacked and tormented as she often was by the devil, in two things alone he was never suffered to approach her : she remained during her whole life free from the least temptation against either purity or humility. Her love of the poor was very great. ' It is a vent to one's charity to serve the poor,' she would say. She suffered from dreadful bodily pains, but nothing could ever keep her at home when there was question of any soul to be gained. She was ready for the service of every one ; ever with the same glad and smiling countenance as though her own sufferings were forgotten." A more active life than this can scarcely be described ; yet we have but to turn the leaves of the volume, and we find the

chapters preceding that which speaks so beautifully of her zeal and charity, treating of the supernatural graces enjoyed by this holy soul. She was marked with the Stigmata ; she received the Holy Ghost in a visible and sensible manner ; she was mystically espoused to our Lord, and wore on her finger the ring placed there by His hand ; and her head was adorned with the precious wounds of His thorny crown. She has left behind her some very beautiful *Divine Songs*, and some yet more beautiful spiritual maxims. The former are outbursts of the purest charity ; the latter are remarkable for their sagacity and practical utility ; and are evidently the outcome of a mind long accustomed to the guidance of souls.

Francesca Vacchini of Viterbo, like her namesake St. Frances of Rome, was privileged to enjoy the constant visible protection and companionship of her Guardian Angel. She was devoured with zeal for souls ; it seemed to be her one abiding thought. " Father," she would constantly say to her Confessor, " it seems to me there is nothing we can do which can give God so much glory or the angels so much joy as to save souls ; what does your Reverence think ?" " Certainly," he would reply, " it is so." Then she would say : " Let us, therefore, do something for souls. What can we do ? For there is little time ; and, when we come to die, we shall have done nothing." She was constantly getting into trouble from this absorbing passion for saving souls, which she exercised without the smallest thought of human respect. People raised calumnies of all kinds against her and must needs be greatly shocked and disedified at the thought of one of her sex and age preaching to others. Much afflicted on one of these occasions at the reports

circulated against her, Francesca was weeping before an image of our Lady, when her angel appeared and gently reproved her for her tears. "Francesca," he said, "hast thou forgotten thy vocation? Hast thou not given thy heart and thy soul, thy intellect and will, yea, and thy very self into the hands of the Mother of God? Fear not, therefore, that she will ever abandon thee, it is the will of God and of His Mother that thou work for souls; and know now once again that this is the vocation which He gives thee." It would be impossible to recount all she did in following out this vocation; speaking familiarly with her angel one day, as her custom was, she said, "*Ange'lo mio*, I yield to thee in every other virtue, for I know thou dost possess them more perfectly than I, and that I neither have nor can do anything; but in the matter of zeal for souls I will not yield even to thee." "And what did your angel reply?" said her Confessor, when she related this story. "He did not reprove me as I deserved," she said, "but treated me very kindly, and said it was no great wonder that we should so care for one another's salvation, inasmuch as by grace we were transformed into the likeness of God."

In the simplicity and admirable folly of a soul absorbed in charity, Francesca even contemplated the possibility of saving the devils! "Father," she once said to her Confessor, "I do not know if the desire is displeasing to God; but, were it possible, I would gladly suffer anything to convert and save the devils." In her works of charity to her neighbour she had to endure much opposition from her family, who strongly objected to her liberality; but nothing daunted her. In her prayers we scarcely know which to admire most, the familiarity of her intercourse with God and His Blessed Mother and all the heavenly

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spirits, or the way in which she was ever forgetting herself and offering all things for the salvation of the world. The efficacy of her burning charity was known and esteemed in heaven ; and angels appeared, lovingly contending with each other for her prayers, one moving her to say a *Salve* for such a soul, another suggesting the needs of a second ; it was as though they made her the intercessor for their clients.

One of her beautiful visions we give at length, as a sample of many to be found in her life. " It happened that, one Holy Thursday, she was meditating in the church after Holy Communion, as was her custom, and lo ! our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to her under the form of a fair and comely little lamb, and suffered her to take Him into her arms and tenderly caress Him. She thanked Him with all her heart for this favour and for the marvellous spiritual sweetness which His presence gave her ; but, even as she held and gazed upon Him, He disappeared, leaving her sad and tearful at His departure. As she was still weeping and bemoaning her loss, her angel spoke to her and said : ' Why weepest thou, Francesca ? ' But she was so sorrowful for the loss of her Lord that the sight of her angel gave her no comfort as it was wont to do ; and she said : ' Tell me, what sin did I commit to make Him depart from me so soon ? ' ' Sister,' replied the angel, ' it was no sin of thine that made Him depart ; it happened for the benefit of the world.' ' Ah ! my good angel,' she answered, ' I would fain know how the world could benefit by my Lord being taken from me.' ' He came,' said the angel, ' to inflame thy charity ; and He departed, because, had He remained, thou wouldst have been so taken up with the sweetness which His sensible presence imparted, that thou wouldst altogether have forgotten those poor blind sinners

for whom He would have thee live. Reflect, therefore, and consider what must be the misery of their eternal separation from God, if thou sufferest thus from the loss of His presence for a little while.' And so saying, the angel left her."

But, after all, there can be no example of the twofold life which is the essential spirit of our Order to equal that of our Seraphic Mother, St. Catharine of Siena, and of the one who so closely followed in her footsteps, "Rose, our Sister." Of the latter, whose mystic life of intercourse with her Spouse has in it a depth of tenderness and sweet familiarity which perhaps surpasses anything we can find in the lives of the Saints, and whose union with God was so uninterrupted that it is said of her that, whether she walked, worked, or whatever she did, she was always in prayer, we read many surprising things concerning her zeal for souls. Not able to preach to the Indians herself, she continually exhorted and inspired others to devote themselves to missionary labours; and whenever she cast her eyes on the lofty mountains of South America, she wept for the eternal loss of the barbarous people who dwelt there. Her terrible macerations of the flesh were all offered for sinners; and she is said never to have spoken to any one without drawing him to God and inducing him to lead a better life. At her funeral the sick and poor crowded around her body, lamenting aloud that they had lost their nurse and their mother. Her charity towards them was on the same scale as that of St. Catharine, and was evinced by the same heroic acts of victory over nature. She served in the hospitals, and we know that it was her design to educate boys in order to fit them for the apostolic ministry, which she could not herself exercise; and to this purpose

she intended to devote all the money she could either earn or beg. Finally, we need only quote the words she was heard to utter in a very transport of divine fervour : " Would to God that I could be torn in pieces and laid at the gate of hell as a net to hinder men from casting themselves therein, as they daily do ! "

When we turn to the example of St. Catharine herself, it is evident that, to give any idea of the extent and variety of her active labours for others, we should have to write her life. There is literally no work of charity which does not find its place there ; nor can we imagine an existence more full of external, distracting cares than hers ; yet the name by which we call her tells us how far such incessant labour was from disturbing her contemplative union with God. She is, *par excellence*, the " Seraphic Mother," the Saint of ecstasy and miracles and prayer, marked with the Stigmata and the crown of thorns, and learning her infused and marvellous science from the very lips of Jesus. And in her *Dialogue* she teaches with singular clearness and sublimity the doctrine of which her own life afforded so marvellous an exposition. Far from separating prayer and work for souls as two different lives, she hangs the one upon the other. " All prayer," she says, " is ordained by God in order that the soul may arrive at perfect love of Him and of its neighbour ; never therefore shall we displease God by leaving our prayers to attend to the necessities of others ; whereas we shall indeed displease Him, if we neglect our neighbour because we dislike to be disturbed at our prayers. Rather know this : that in charity to others we shall ever find God ; and that we shall not find Him in that fancied quiet which we seek to enjoy in our devout exercises. "

And again, speaking in the person of God, she says :



“He who is willing to sacrifice his own consolation in prayer for the service of his neighbour shall gain Me and his neighbour.” But, when she comes to speak of this work for souls in her familiar letters, she leaves the calm and solemn language of the *Dialogue* and uses expressions which show all the ardour with which this great sentiment burnt within her. She bids us “feed on souls, steeping them in the Precious Blood,” and this image is repeated again and again. We know that, after a life wholly given in sacrifice to this work, her death was at last, in some sort, an offering for the Church, and that two words were ever on her lips, even in those last hours, “the honour of God and the good of souls.” Moreover, it is well for us to remember that her *desire* was for a life of solitude. As a child she wished to flee to the desert; afterwards for three years she shut herself up and never spoke to any living being save in confession; though it appears probable that this rule admitted of some occasional relaxation. “The blessed Mother Catharine,” said her English disciple, Father William Flete, “begged of our Lord to grant her solitude, and He replied: ‘Many live in a cell, who abide outside the cell; but I will that thy cell should be the knowledge of thyself and of thy sins;’ and from this cell she never departed.” It is this interior cell which she so often recommended to the Blessed Raymond, which no man should be able to take from him.

It may seem needless to add any illustrations of the essentially Dominican virtue of zeal for souls from the lives of the Fathers of the Order, because an imitation of their apostolic ministry is, of course, impossible to ourselves. Nevertheless, inasmuch as our spirit is required to be the same as theirs, and we are called to co-operate in our measure in the same work, some things deserve to be

remarked. For instance, it is encouraging to read such a passage as the following in the life of the great Apostle, St. Vincent Ferrer (A.D. 1350-1419). "Inasmuch as the sun sheds its rays on the smallest herbs as well as on the cedars of Libanus, Vincent thought it as much worth his care to attend to the souls of the ignorant and of children as of the wisest and greatest men. He had certain fixed hours in the day for receiving children and other simple persons, whom he taught how to make the sign of the cross, to obey their parents, to say the *Pater, Ave, Credo, Salve*, and the mysteries of the Faith, often to invoke the names of Jesus and Mary, to pray morning and evening, and how to hear Mass. Moreover he appointed two of his followers to collect the children every morning and teach them Christian doctrine and some spiritual hymns in praise of the Saviour and of the ever blessed Virgin; so that having learnt these things early and tasted of the sweetness of God's truths, they might acquire a distaste for wicked and profane songs, and at home or in the streets might rather accustom themselves to the singing of these devout verses, which might be the better imprinted on their hearts by help of the sweetness of the tunes." It is certainly pleasant to find so great a man including in his apostolic labours the ordinary routine of a poor-school course of teaching, and even providing "sweet tunes" for the devout verses of his children and scholars. His life of miracles was all given to the souls of others; "he began when a child to teach other children, and went on to the hour of his death, sacrificing every hour of his time, giving up all repose and all comfort, and ready to receive all who came to him, whether princes or beggars, for he looked on all as souls equally redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ, and equally worthy of

being gained to God. Writing once to the General of the Order, he says : ' There is no longer time for either eating or sleeping in the midst of these incredible occupations.' "

In his own day this marvellous activity earned St. Vincent hard names. People called him " the vagabond friar," " the enemy of religious seclusion." Little cared he for the judgment of men, however. He knew very well that no religious seclusion could ever yield him one half the peace and union with God which he found in labouring for souls. Nor was the activity of his spirit confined to preaching ; he cared for men's corporal needs as well as for those of their souls ; he was called the protector of orphans from his tender love of poor children, and was the means, says his biographer, of building an innumerable number of churches, bridges, hospitals, and other useful and charitable institutions. At Lerida, in particular, he erected the great Home or Hospice for orphans which still remains. He persuaded the confraternity of his penitents to undertake this work, and afterwards received them all into the Third Order of Penance, and allowed them to lead a kind of collegiate life in the orphanage. The orphans were confided to the charge of the women ; and all the inmates were clothed in the Dominican habit. After his death this Institute was called " the Home of the Orphan Children of St. Vincent," and a long account of this interesting orphanage is to be found in the pages of Father Miguel. In Spain St. Vincent is always regarded as the patron saint of orphans, on account of the number of these houses founded by him, and at the beginning of the Book of Constitutions for the orphanage which he induced his fellow-citizens to found at Valentia, there is a portrait of him, surrounded by the orphans, all dressed in little black and white habits

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as children of the Order. We may, therefore, safely consider this charity, so specially belonging to ourselves, as essentially one of those adopted by our Order and consonant with its spirit.

We should never end, if we attempted to give a summary of the charities practised by other great Saints of our Order, as St. Lewis Bertrand (A.D. 1526-1581) and St. Antoninus (A.D. 1389-1459), who served and buried the plague-stricken with their own hands; the Venerable Bartholomew of the Martyrs (A.D. 1514-1590), who used to carry the sick to the hospital on his shoulders, or that noble community of Florence who died to a man in the exercise of similar charity in time of pestilence. The very recollection of their names is enough to convince us what place such active charity has ever taken in the sanctity of our Order.

One point, as regards the saintly women of the Order, deserves our notice. Of our four canonised women Saints, three are of the Third Order, St. Catharine of Siena, St. Rose, and St. Catharine de Ricci. Of those who have attained the lesser honour of beatification, twenty-two in number, thirteen were also of the Order of Penance. This fact is not given as in any way intending to exalt the Third Order over the Second, but simply to show that active and laborious duties, so far from necessarily lowering the tone of a religious mind or being in any way incompatible with an elevated degree of sanctity, would certainly seem in our Order to be one of its indispensable conditions.

Having said thus much concerning the active labours of our Sisters, it seems not amiss to refer to another kind of activity, less directly connected with work for souls or charity of any kind, but which has its own consolation

and encouragement to ourselves. We refer to the occupation of their time, supposing that it may not be without interest to gather such brief notices as occur in the lives of our Saints, and which exhibit them to us living much as we do ourselves, sweeping, dusting, cooking, and working hard ; painting, as we have said above, and especially excelling in needlework and embroidery for the service of the altar.

Idleness is a sin with which the Saints of the Dominican Order certainly cannot be charged. Many of them, out of a spirit of humility and poverty, chose the more menial and humble offices of the house, which would not naturally have fallen to their share ; but in communities of the Third Order especially it would seem that very considerable activity was expected of all members of the household. Thus Agatha of the Cross had to wash the habits of the Sisters, and we are told she accepted the office joyfully ; “ though indeed she scarce knew,” says her biographer, “ with which hand to begin, yet she set to work with admirable courage, sparing neither strength nor industry.” Her hands chapped during the labour and caused her great pain ; and we are told she shed many tears over her first day’s washing ; but she had recourse to the Blessed Virgin, who appeared to her, healed her hands and warmed her, for she was terribly cold. Every Saturday she went to market, and she was charged with a variety of other household duties equally uncongenial to her tastes, such as seeing the corn thrashed, etc. Blessed Margaret, widow of the Duke of Savoy (A.D. 1372-1464), particularly distinguished herself by her diligence in sweeping the dormitories and cloisters, and in washing the refectory utensils. “ She was always the first in these

offices," it is said, and the same is related of many others.

As regards the embroiderers of the Order, we desire to give them a more particular notice. The first in rank is St. Rose, of whom it is said, "She was a perfect mistress of needlework, both in designing flowers and in executing them in embroidery or tapestry, and, though her mind was often elevated to God and absorbed in contemplation as she worked, yet her hand guided her needle as perfectly as if she were intent on it alone. Moreover, though she spent twelve hours of the day in prayer, yet she did four times as much as any one else, and her work was of marvellous delicacy and beauty." Blessed Dominica of Paradiso (A.D. 1473-1553) was another admirable embroiderer. She lived by her work and gave abundant alms from its produce. Blessed Catharine of Raconigi was in like manner a most skilful and expeditious spinner of wool; and Catharine of Herrera, indefatigable in her works of charity, was equally so in church-work, making curtains for the tabernacle and whole suits of clothes for her favourite image of the Infant Jesus, with which it was adorned on festival-days, and which were of unusual magnificence. Teresa de la Cerda and some other Spanish Dominicanesses of the sixteenth century were also famous workwomen for the altar, and the tabernacle curtains of their manufacture are highly commended. Mary of Peace, of the Convent of Toledo, bore a singular devotion to the Blessed Sacrament: "Everything which regarded the altar," says her biographer, "work, candles, flowers, etc., she arranged with her own hands." Jane of St. Stephen is said often to have fallen into ecstasy whilst sewing in the common workroom, and the same is said of Isabella of Jesus:

“ She was often in rapture, sitting with the other religious in the large room where they worked in silence and listened to spiritual reading.” And, as we shall have occasion to remark in considering the contemplative character of our Saints, half their visions, ecstasies and revelations were given to them, not in their cells or the choir, but over their work.

## CHAPTER III

### CONTEMPLATIVE SPIRIT AND CHARACTER

IT is evident from much that has been already said that contemplation was so mixed with action in the lives of our Saints that it is impossible to separate them ; and, whilst speaking of the one, we insensibly relate what concerns the other. We have in the preceding pages chosen a few of our most distinguished Saints, and shown them in their active labours : let us now turn the picture and consider these same heroines of charity in their contemplative character. Of the two great Saints Catharine and Rose it seems needless to speak particularly ; we do not require any recapitulation of their wonderful lives of prayer, nor of the revelations and mystic favours which are to be found in the pages of their biographers. But though it be unnecessary to prove that they perfectly united the two states, the fact itself should never be forgotten ; and, whilst we imitate the labours of charity and the exterior activity of our glorious Mother, her seraphic title must ever remind us that half her work and all her life was prayer. We prefer taking our illustrations from others whose lives are not so familiar to us, and the circumstances of whose position may be regarded as less extraordinary.

For instance, we have cited Agatha of the Cross as a remarkable instance of the activity of our Institute. Yet it was she who received those marvellous revelations concerning the Passion of our Lord of a very similar character to those granted almost in our own day to the



Augustinian Sister Anne Catharine Emmerich, and who was four times taken up to heaven to behold "things which it is not given to man to utter" (2 *Cor.* xii. 4). Catharine of Herrera, that most active of Dominicanesses, is yet said to have "kept all her familiar communications for the Infant Jesus." Six months before she died, being then eighty years of age, this wonderful servant of God entirely lost her sight, "a privation she readily endured, and which was easy to her to bear, because her communion with God was so sweet and continual;" words which show the interior prayer of this saint of charity to have been as much a part of her sanctity as her charity itself.

Maria Raggi, a married woman and the mother of a family, living in the world as a Tertiary, whose most retired place of prayer was a corner in the public churches of Rome, and half of whose life was spent in visiting the poor and serving in the hospitals, bore the Stigmata on her venerable hands and received the crown of thorns from our Lord Himself. She was mystically espoused to Him, as St. Catharine was; and her guardian angel was accustomed to speak to her "in an audible voice." To her another and yet holier voice cried aloud: "Look up, Maria, and behold the glory of God." She did so, and beheld a vision of ineffable beauty; and the voice cried again: "Thou art My Spouse, My well-beloved, My beautiful and undefiled dove, whom I love with a love which thou canst never understand." The great Church of the Minerva, where she was accustomed to pray, was the scene of wonderful revelations. As she knelt amongst the people in the nave, the sacred edifice would appear to her filled with the glory of heaven. The army of cherubim and seraphim would descend and

sing the *Sanctus* at Mass. She saw our Lady going up and down the aisles ; and sometimes, when she left her place and went to communicate at the altar, angels would go processionally before her in the sight of those who stood by. The account of her visions fills an entire volume ; and her biographer adds : " To convey an idea of her prayer, it is enough to say that it was the exercise of her entire life. Were we to give a detailed account of her ecstasies, visions and loving colloquies with our Lord, we should but weary our readers." Very often, even in the public streets, she was seen surrounded by a visible glory ; and, after her arrival in Rome, scarcely a day passed without a visit from our Lord or our Blessed Lady, or some Angel or Saint.

Mary of Jesus, one of the most imitable of our Saints, of whose active spirit we have already spoken, took care to inspire her subjects with interior devotion even over their work. She loved to give them some occupation in common and to join in it herself, beginning with an exhortation to do it in the spirit of prayer and recollection. " All for God, my children," she would say ; " let us do this for Him, and for Him alone." The omission of this act of intention formed the chief matter of her confessions. Every least action was to her a prayer ; and this was carried out with singular perfection. She gained such a habit of recollection that everything seemed to raise her mind and heart to God. Ringing the bell, or speaking with seculars, or working about the house, God was in all she did ; nor did she ever lose the sense of His presence.

Some of our lay-sisters have been noted for this spirit of recollection over their work. Of Sister Sabina of Valladolid it is said : " Amid all the distractions of her

work she was never out of mental prayer." Another lay-sister, Catharine of Baterna, is mentioned as having observed perpetual silence, being continually engaged in meditation on the Passion. Of Helen of the Cross of the Convent of Salamanca it is said: "The means by which she reached perfection in a short time was the continual exercise of the presence of God." She had charge of the refectory; and, in order never to be distracted, she imagined the Prioress to be Jesus Christ, the Sub-prioress our Blessed Lady, and the other Sisters the Apostles; and so her office became the means of prayer to her, and the hours spent in its duties were among the most devotional in the whole day. Magdalen Angelica, a Spanish Tertiary (A.D. 1549-1580), had to earn her bread by her daily work; nevertheless God bestowed on her an extraordinary gift of prayer. Of her, if of any one, it may be said that she had a Dominican education; for she was entirely trained in spiritual things by the Fathers of the Order, and very early entered among the Sisters of Penance under their direction. She is said to have learnt everything from the Rosary; and, by means of what it taught her, she enjoyed a union with God so complete that neither work, sickness, nor the presence of others ever disturbed her prayer. "The labour which her poverty rendered necessary never interrupted her devotions, nor her devotions her work."

Again, how beautiful is the picture of Magdalen de Redon, a Tertiary of Toulouse in the sixteenth century, who, when nursing the sick in the hospitals, was habitually absorbed in two reflections, the evil caused by sin and the contemplation of Christ in the person of those whom she tended; which last thought was so lively and constant in her soul, that she would rise by night and seek for

some houseless and desolate wanderer in the streets, in order to minister to her suffering Lord.

Of Blessed Osanna of Mantua (A.D. 1449-1505) it is said: "Every place was a place of prayer to her, the streets even, and the fields; and often she was in ecstasy as she walked through the crowded thoroughfares of the city," reminding us of those words of St. Catharine, so often repeated in her writings: "To the soul that has attained to perfect love, all places are the right places and all times the right times for prayer."

We have already spoken of the many instances of raptures and supernatural visitations vouchsafed to our Saints in the midst of their ordinary active occupations. Every one will remember how St. Catharine herself was rapt in ecstasy as she turned the spit in her father's kitchen, and, falling into the fire, received no hurt. In fact, the constant habit of making exterior things themselves the means of rising to God entirely removed all distractions from such occupations; visible things were all steps to things invisible. We are told how strikingly and specially this exercise was the means of sanctification to Dominica of Paradiso. Working in a market garden or in the harvest-field as a poor peasant child, serving in the kitchen or the stables, it was all one; the world was to her a great picture-book of God, and whilst she saw divine mysteries in all things around her, nothing had the power to distract her mind from Him. Again in the life of Sister Guimara (A.D. 1491) we find that she was visited by a most beautiful vision of the Rosary as she was mixing the flour for making bread; and no wonder, for it was her custom, as she worked, to say the Rosary; "inasmuch as it was late, and she was alone at such times, it seemed to her a fit time for prayer." This kind of

prayer by help of exterior objects was very familiar to Blessed Osanna of Mantua: "If she did but enter her garden, the thought of the garden where our Lord suffered would cause her to experience something of His agony, and she would remain for hours absorbed and wholly unconscious."

Mary of Jesus acknowledged to her director that, the more she was surrounded with business, the more closely she felt her heart united to God, from the habit she had formed of rising to Him in prayer through creatures. No wonder that special graces should be given as tokens of God's favour to those who could thus turn work into prayer. Of Blessed Magdalen Angelica, who lived by her labour, it is stated that the hands so employed were often seen to glitter as if covered with diamonds, for the servile work on which they were employed had been converted into a work to God's honour by the spirit in which it was done. Simply to give a list of the hours spent in prayer by these Saints, or of the number and variety of their ecstasies would be tedious; though, when we read over such a list and remember that many of those who were accustomed to recite the Divine Office, and daily to spend six, eight, or even twelve hours in prayer, had to work for their living, and others, like Catharine of Herrera, were so actively engaged in labours of charity as to be obliged to give the day to work and the night to prayer, the mere enumeration of their spiritual exercises is sufficiently astonishing. But, as it is of course possible for persons to say a great number of prayers without in any degree attaining to a spirit of contemplation, it seems more to the point to remind ourselves of some of the supernatural favours granted to the most active of our Saints.

Blessed Catharine of Raconigi was, as we know, living in the world and working for her own support. She was forbidden by our Lord Himself to retire into the cloister as she desired, and was commanded to remain in her father's house and work for souls. Outwardly, therefore, her life was exposed to all the distractions of secular conversation, yet she may be regarded as one of the most contemplative of our Saints. Her life is little else than a succession of visions, the most distinctive characteristic of which is the very marked and singular manner in which she at different times received the gifts of the Holy Ghost and was made sensibly conscious of His divine presence. Compelled to work when only nine years old "without taking a moment's rest," she was sometimes overcome by sadness, and leaning her head wearily on her loom would shed tears, commending the poverty and misery of her home to God. In this sad and toilsome childhood she was consoled by the familiar intercourse she enjoyed with the Child Jesus. He generally appeared to her as of the same age as herself; and, not to speak of higher and more mysterious favours, we are told in illustration of the singular sweetness and familiarity of her intercourse with Him, that He often gave her clothes and other things of which she stood in need, such as rosaries, and sometimes even money when she was in great distress. Once, when a very little child, she broke a cup greatly valued by her mother; and as she stood weeping over her misfortune, a beautiful child of her own age entered and made the broken pieces unite again, and Catharine recognised Him to be our Lord Himself. All the after life of Catharine was marked by the same familiar intercourse with the supernatural world. God was perpetually revealing Himself to her over her

work, as she bent over her loom, or busied herself in the domestic offices of the house. And, if it seem singular that a life so servile and so distracted by petty cares should be in so special a manner one of contemplation and ecstasy, the explanation is easily to be found when we read of what nature were the spiritual exercises she practised. She had little time for prayer in retirement, and yet she seems exactly to have carried out St. Catharine's rule for making her life a continual prayer. "She no sooner awoke," it is said, "than she got up, and without taking into account the private prayers which she intended to make in the cabinet of her soul, she decided on everything she proposed to do that day, directing all her actions to the glory of God." The words of St. Catharine are as follows: "The continual prayer to which every living soul is bound is holy desire founded on charity to God and our neighbour, so that we do all our actions for God's sake; and this desire rises as prayer to God at all times and in all places." By means of this prayer Blessed Catharine rose to such a perfect union with God that, if we read only those chapters in her life which relate her ecstasies, her visions, the revelations of heaven and hell and purgatory made to her in prayer, and the close and loving intercourse that existed between her and her Divine Spouse, we should imagine we were reading the life of some cloistered contemplative rather than that of a poor weaver at the loom, who had to earn her bread by the hard labour of her hands.

We have spoken above of the active labours of Sister Rosa Maria Giannini, and how for forty years of her life she was incessantly engaged in the instruction and care of souls. Her days may almost be said to have

been spent in public, so vast were the numbers that crowded to see and speak to her on all sorts of subjects. Yet it is of her that her confessors affirmed that she had reached the highest degree of contemplation, namely, that of transformation into the likeness of God. "She attained thereto," it is added, "by the constant exercise of the presence of God." And so, when she came to instruct and guide the consciences of others, so far from imagining herself dispensed from interior exercises of prayer because of the ceaseless occupation of her time, she more than ever felt the need of the divine help and inspiration, which being largely given in answer to her prayers, she never counselled any one save as she was herself directed by the interior voice of God. Whatever the affairs in which she was engaged, she never failed to receive this divine assistance; nor was she ever able to say that she had been for a single moment deprived of the sense of God's presence in her soul. She received every one of those extraordinary favours of which we read in the lives of the great contemplative Saints; but during the last fifteen years of her life visions and ecstasies ceased, and she seemed to have reached a union with God so perfect that, to use the words of her biographer, "the memory and all the other interior powers of the soul were utterly purged and purified from all sensible images; she saw God in her soul and loved Him so much the more perfectly as her love was the less sensible; it seemed, indeed, that her contemplation was continual and uninterrupted; and, whatever she did, she referred all to God and did all for Him."

Of Francesca Vacchini, the stories of whose extraordinary familiarity with the angels and Saints fill an



entire volume, we find that every exterior action suggested some special prayer. Whenever she baked the bread at home, she meditated on the Blessed Sacrament ; and, inasmuch as the conversation and gossip of her mother in some degree interrupted her recollection, she had recourse to innocent devices to induce her to leave the office of making the bread entirely to her, that she might be the less disturbed in her devotions. She was the pupil of our Blessed Lady, who taught her all the prayers and exercises she was wont to perform ; the angels were her companions and servants ; they carried her messages ; they helped her in her work ; and, if she were sad or tired, they were wont to encourage her with their songs, specially with the *Salve Regina*. Such was the habit of prayer which she had attained, that she prayed even in her sleep, and was frequently heard by those who watched by her side, conversing with our Lord during the hours of slumber. The great instruction of our Lady to her in the matter of prayer was that it should be frequent. "Some," she would say, "say their prayers in the morning, and then no more till night ; but know that it is better to say short prayers often than long ones rarely ; because by frequent prayers the soul is kept in a state of fervour and does not get entangled with the things of this world." We find, therefore, in all the vocal prayers taught by our Lady to this holy soul, particular instructions not to say them all at once, but at certain hours, so as to sanctify the whole of the day by prayer ; for, as her favourite angel was wont to say, "Each separate time you think of God, He thinks of you ; therefore, if you are always thinking of Him, you are always united to Him." To Francesca, as we have seen, zeal

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for souls was given as a special vocation by a singular and supernatural call. Her life was essentially an active one ; nevertheless, we are left in no doubt as to what her sentiments were with regard to the necessity of prayer in those called to such a life. A certain religious consulted her as to the propriety of shortening some of his daily devotions on account of his many occupations and the necessity of his applying himself to study. " But, Reverend Father," was Francesca's reply, " what will you study if not God ?"

One of her visions in reference to the subject of prayer is too beautiful to be omitted. She was wont to say that continual prayer should be practised for two reasons : first, because it is commanded by our Lord that men should always pray, and secondly, because of its intrinsic necessity and beauty. Very often she was heard to say to herself, " O holy prayer ! how lovely a thing thou art, how dear to God, and how glorious to the whole Court of Heaven !" One day, after words like these, she chanced to raise her eyes to heaven, and, as she did so, she exclaimed : " Lord, let me see how beautiful a thing prayer is in Thy sight." Then there appeared to her the likeness of a glorious star, in comparison with the brightness of which the sun itself seemed dark. Little by little the star rose towards heaven, and she followed it with her eyes, until it vanished from her sight. Then, after a while, as she was considering what this might mean, the star reappeared, and she saw that it had reached the highest heaven, where God dwells ; and, as soon as it had arrived there, it went and placed itself on the bosom of Mary, and so was seen no more. " Doubtless," adds the biographer, " God was pleased by this vision

to confirm the teaching of St. Bernard, that God gives us all graces through the hands of Mary, and that none of our prayers or works can please Him, unless offered to Him by her."

We feel, however, whilst speaking thus generally of the spirit of prayer embodied in the lives of our Saints, that from what has been said to illustrate the close connection between their devotions and their work, it is quite possible to draw a most erroneous conclusion. Reading the terms in which St. Catharine speaks of works of charity, when she bids us rather leave our prayers to serve our neighbour than neglect our neighbour because we do not like to be disturbed at our prayers, or again, hearing of the abundant graces enjoyed by those whose exterior life was one of ceaseless activity, some may be tempted to suppose that this activity is the great thing required, and that work *is* prayer, rather than that it *may* be so. And whilst they read how exterior occupations were no distractions to such souls as Blessed Catharine of Raconigi, the conclusion may somewhat hastily be drawn that they never are distractions, and that a busy and bustling life has really no special dangers of its own, and no tendency to secularise and dissipate the mind. Now it is quite certain that, if the laborious duties of the Saints were no distractions to them, it arose from the fact that they were guarded by a triple panoply of prayer. Work did not secularise or otherwise injure them, because they had gained the gift of contemplation, not because in itself it had no tendency to do so. So far from the spirit of the Order being to put activity in the place of prayer, we cannot escape from the conclusion that the vocation of a Dominican religious, enclosed or unenclosed, is as essentially the vocation to a contemplative state as it is to apostolic

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labour for souls. Moreover, after reading any number of the lives of our Saints and comparing what is there said of their gifts and habits of prayer with the teaching of St. Catharine, St. Vincent Ferrer, and others on the same subject, we are struck at finding an extraordinary harmony in the teaching and the practice of the Order, and are able to trace with great distinctness certain special features in the system they reveal to us, which authorise us in claiming for some particular methods of prayer the marked approval of the Order. The first thing we remark is a singular simplicity both in the directions given by those who have written on the subject and in their practice, so far as we can trace it in their biographies. There is too a very large and general use of vocal prayers as a means to mental prayer ; and these vocal prayers are not long meditations in which the subject is, as it were, analysed by the understanding, but ejaculations and short familiar prayers, such as the *Salve*, the *Ave*, hymns of the Church, and other similar devotions, from which the mind was trained to rise to contemplation by the exercise of the affections, after the manner in which we see words and affections united in the Rosary.

This preference for simple and easy devotions and for those in most common use was particularly observable in St. Vincent Ferrer, a man who is always to be reckoned among the greatest contemplatives, as he was doubtless the greatest Apostle, of the Order. St. Antoninus calls him “ a man of marvellous devotion,” and Gomez in his *Life* says : “ St. Vincent whether in the streets, or the choir, or his own cell, or preaching, or on a journey, or whatever he did, was always tranquil, because he had made an oratory in his heart, and there conversed uninterruptedly with God, without any outward thing

disturbing him." This great Saint gave the first rank to the devout saying or hearing of Mass, observing : " However many other kinds of prayer there may be, the Mass is the highest and greatest work of contemplation." Next to it he placed the devout recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary. He was accustomed to disapprove of the practice of some who abandoned the Lord's Prayer for other devotions not composed or directly given by Christ, and was wont to insist that this form of prayer, whose author was our Lord Himself, must be both most acceptable to God, and most meritorious and useful for ourselves, for which reason he frequently in his preaching taught the people various ways of using it to their soul's profit. Now, if we turn from his life to his writings, we find given at length one of these modes of using the *Pater*, and at once we recognise the union of vocal and mental prayer above alluded to, and of which St. Catharine makes such frequent mention. It consisted of the recitation morning and evening of ten *Paters* in honour of the ten Divine Excellences, namely, God's Power, Wisdom and Goodness, the Creation, the Providence whereby He governs the world, the Redemption of man, the glory of the elect, the condemnation of the reprobate, the purification of souls in Purgatory, and the last Judgment. Each of these points he draws out briefly, so that the whole forms a devotion of a kind similar to the Rosary. These exercises admitted, of course, of infinite variety, of which the above is only an illustration ; but throughout his instructions we always find this enlarging and spiritualising of familiar vocal prayers among the favourite practices he recommends.

St. Catharine explains this kind of prayer more particularly. The beginner in prayer she directs, not to any

exercise of the imagination or of the understanding, but to rise at once to affective prayer by means of vocal ejaculations: "Not," she says, "that we can hope to get any good out of this kind of prayer, if it is only vocal, as some souls seem to expect, whose prayers are words rather than affections, and who consider only how to make up their appointed number of Psalms and *Pater Nosters*. But, whilst the soul is still imperfect, her prayer will be imperfect too; and therefore, to prevent idleness of mind, it is best to go by the way of vocal prayer: but not so as to use it without praying mentally; that is to say, we must try to raise and direct our minds to divine affections by exercising ourselves in the knowledge of God and of ourselves. . . . And whenever we feel our soul touched and visited by God, we should discontinue our vocal prayers, and then, when the divine visitation has passed, return to them again, thus beginning vocally as a means to teach mental prayer; and in this way vocal prayer will lead us on to perfection. This kind of prayer, if persevered in, will make us taste the essence of devotion and the food of the Blood of Christ our Lord."

Our Seraphic Mother in these passages does not particularise what kind of vocal prayers should be used; but, if we turn to the practice of other Saints, we shall find they were for the most part, as we have said, short and well-known devotions of the Church. For example, we must understand in this sense those extraordinary devotions of St. Rose of Lima, who was wont to make what she called "spiritual garments" for our Lady and the Infant Jesus, composed of *Salves*, *Aves*, Rosaries and *Glorias*, to the number of many thousands. These vocal prayers were, doubtless, the threads on which she strung her contemplation of the "Mysteries of Mary."

We have before alluded to the devotions taught to Francesca Vacchini by our Lady herself, but, at the risk of repetition, we will here give some passages on the subject more at length. The first was the repetition of the hymn *O Gloriosa Domina* at every hour ; for, to use the words given us by Father Roberti as spoken by our Lady, " I will not have you say these prayers all at once ; but, whenever the clock strikes, you shall kneel before my image and repeat the hymn at once, that so you may the oftener think of me." Then she taught her to say every morning twelve *Paters* and *Aves* in honour of her twelve privileges or joys in heaven (a devotion which seems, if one may say so, a favourite one with our Lady, as it was the same she herself taught to our own St. Aquinas). And again she appeared to Francesca and desired her to salute her every day with nine *Salves* ; and the instruction was repeated, they were not all to be got through at once, like a task ; but three were to be said at three different times, each time with a different intention—the first time for those in their agony, the second for those in mortal sin, and the last time for the souls in Purgatory.

We find also a hymn of Francesca's own composition, in which each word of the Hail Mary is drawn out into several lines, evincing the aptitude with which she had applied herself to this practice of imbibing the sweetness of these simple prayers by joining them to affective contemplation.

And, while speaking of Francesca's devotions, we cannot refrain from introducing one of the beautiful stories in which her life is so rich, which may be useful to us if ever tempted to think the multitude and importance of our occupations sometimes an excuse for shortening our

prayers or decreasing the fervour with which they are recited. "Sister Francesca," it is said, "having one morning to entertain some strangers, relations of her family, found it difficult to attend to her usual prayers with her accustomed fervour of spirit. In the evening, when she was in her oratory, the Blessed Virgin appeared to her, holding in her hand a bundle of roses, some of which were very beautiful, whilst others were faded and withered, and said, 'Daughter, these roses which I hold are your prayers, which I am unwilling just yet to present to my Son, because I am waiting for the withered flowers to become red and beautiful like the others.' At these words Francesca felt greatly pained and mortified, for she quickly understood that the faded roses signified the prayers and exercises she had that day performed with so little fervour, and she said: 'O Mother of Mercy, what can I do to make up for that wherein I have failed?' 'You shall,' replied Mary, 'say three *Paters* and three *Aves* in honour of St. Mary Magdalen, and beg her to supply your defects by the fervour of her prayers.' Then Francesca began to say these prayers with great fervour; and when she had done so, the glorious Virgin once more appeared with the same bunch of roses in her hand, and Francesca perceived that they were all of equal beauty and freshness of colour. And Mary, smiling gladly, said to her, 'I am now going to give them to my Son;' and so saying, she disappeared."

Francesca also enjoyed the privilege of the constant society and instruction of her guardian angel; and the rule of life and prayer given her by him forms one of the most striking chapters of her life. In it we find the form of thanksgiving after Communion prescribed by him, and it is exactly in keeping with the other devotions to which



we have alluded. It consists of a great number of the shortest and simplest acts of praise, scarcely more than a few words, enumerating the various perfections of God or His mercies to the soul. The manner and reason of its being given is thus described : “ The angel, having ordered the servant of God to remain with her heart and thoughts united to her Lord for the space of three hours after Communion, gave her the following considerations to serve her as motives or points which she should enlarge with high and devout affections ; and,” adds her confessor, “ when she showed them to me, she said : ‘ Oh ! Father, would that I could record all the thoughts which our Lord in His mercy has deigned to grant me as I contemplate these points ; for they would surely melt the coldest heart, and force them to weep who never wept before.’ ” The points themselves are too long for insertion here. We refer to them only as another illustration of the use of vocal prayer to be thus dwelt on and enlarged with devout contemplative affection. These brief ejaculations, arranged in the form of a corona or chaplet, might be taken one by one, and each might afford ample subject of nourishment to the soul, which would be thus just helped on to pray by words, too short to distract the memory, and too simple to embarrass the understanding.

These observations are intended, of course, only to point out one of the means adapted by our Saints by which to arrive at mental prayer, not as being in any way the method exclusively taught or practised. St. Catharine's words will have sufficiently indicated that vocal prayer thus used was, in her opinion, chiefly valuable to the imperfect or beginners ; nevertheless there is abundant evidence that it was at any rate a favourite and most general exercise. If, from the use of these vocal ejaculations, we

turn to the higher kind of contemplation as we find it described, we may still venture to point out simplicity as one of its distinguishing features. The extraordinary number of those who have received the Stigmata of the Passion immediately suggests to us what was the principal subject of all their meditations, the sufferings, namely, of our Lord, drawn out into that minuteness of detail and arrangement which might be expected from those who doubtless owed their first training in prayer to the simple teaching of the Rosary. The very fact of so vast a number of instances existing among us of these mysterious and wonderful graces is itself a revelation as to the character of the prayer of the Order. For, although such things, being themselves wholly supernatural, must not of course be explained or accounted for in any human way, still they tell us rather of the sympathy of the will and affections with the sufferings of the Cross than of the exercise of the reason or understanding. If we follow Blessed Stephana of Soncino through those long and varied visions in which she was made to participate in all the agonies of her Lord, we find all that she learned, and all that we may suppose she was intended to learn by them, in those words sung by her angel in her ears, and which ever after sounded unceasingly in her heart: "Love God, love Him Who loves thee; love that Infinite Good, that only object infinitely worthy of thy love. O my daughter, love not the deceitful world; love not that which has never loved thee." Then all the angels joined in the chorus and repeated: "Love not the world, but God; the Creator, not the creature."

Again, the simplicity of the Venerable Agnes of Jesus, a French Dominicaness of the seventeenth century (A.D. 1602-1634), and the spiritual friend of M. Olier, is

exquisitely portrayed in the chapter of her life which treats of her sublime gift of prayer. Father Boyre, S.J., on reading a book in which he found mention made of certain meditations which were entitled "most high contemplations," desired her to explain their meaning, to which she replied with her accustomed humility that she understood nothing about such things. "Nevertheless," replied he, "I am determined to know, and I lay you under obedience to tell me all about them to-morrow." Greatly puzzled how to comply with this precept, Agnes had recourse to prayer. Her good angel appeared to her, and she besought him to give her the required explanation. The angel smiled at her simplicity in supposing herself ignorant of the meaning of contemplation, when God had raised her, unconsciously to herself, to its most sublime heights; and immediately he caused her to be rapt in ecstasy, and she had an ineffable vision of the glories of Paradise, and saw the multitude of blessed spirits praising God and absorbed in Him. On beholding this glorious sight she was filled with an extreme disrelish for all creatures, and formed a resolution never to attach herself to earthly things. The relation of this vision and of the effects which it produced in her was all the explanation she offered to her confessor, who remained well satisfied with her answer.

In this narrative we again see a profound realisation of God's presence and the resolution to detach the heart from all creatures and fix it on the Creator given as the sublimest height of contemplation. "He who has God has all," was the sentence ever in her mouth, and it contained the whole summary of her prayer. Sometimes when she was in rapture her words were overheard and taken down. These ejaculations from the lips of Saints in the very mo-

ments of their union with God in prayer are surely of extraordinary value ; yet what simplicity in all their words ! The collection of acts of love in St. Alfonso's *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament* are excellent samples of the kind of prayer to which we here allude. " Do not leave me, O my Love ; " " Thy will, not mine, be done ; " " O Love, all for Thee, and nothing besides Thee ! " Such were the vocal prayers of Agnes of Jesus, repeated a thousand and a thousand times, with the most ardent emotions of divine charity.

If we turn to the entire teaching of St. Catharine of Siena, it is not too much to say that her doctrine might be collected and compressed into some fifty maxims, and these simple enough for the comprehension of the most ignorant and simple mind. True, they are drawn out and explained in her writings in a wonderful variety of ways, but the essential principles are ever the same : to know ourselves and to know God ; to hate our own vileness, and to love God's goodness ; to have God's honour and the salvation of souls as the end of all we do ; to detach ourselves from all sensible love of creatures, and to serve God for Himself alone, and withal to trust Him with a boundless and infinite trust. Even though she carries us to the sublimest height of contemplation and tells us the very mysteries of rapture and ecstasy, and unfolds to us the hidden sweetness which lies in the gift of tears, we are always carried back to the same thing in the end, with a clear and practical common-sense which is not the least remarkable feature in the teaching of our holy and seraphic Mother ; whilst everything, great or little, be it action or contemplation, work for others or work within our own soul, is coloured and steeped in the Blood of Christ.

The detailed account left us of the prayer of our holy Father St. Dominic forms one of the most beautiful chapters in his life. We can but refer to it here as illustrating another characteristic feature of Dominican prayer, viz., the practice of making the body itself serve as an instrument of devotion by means of genuflexions and prostrations. We are told that St. Dominic loved to pray, in imitation of our Lord in the Garden of Olives, kneeling with his face bowed down or prostrate at full length upon the ground ; or that he would stand before the crucifix, looking at it fixedly and genuflecting before it as many as a hundred times, praying aloud for himself, for sinners, or for the Brethren whom he had sent out to preach, and repeating verses from the Psalms or other portions of Holy Scripture.

In these devout exercises his children have faithfully imitated their father's example. The meditations of Blessed Henry Suso (A.D. 1365) on the Passion, as given in his *Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*, are accompanied, as may be remembered, by one hundred *venias* or prostrations. His expressions are remarkable : " Let every one who desires to meditate briefly and earnestly on the Passion, learn by heart the hundred meditations that follow, comprised in few words, and go devoutly over them every day, with one hundred *venias* or otherwise ; and at every *venia* say a *Pater noster*, *Salve*, or *Ave*, for in this way they were revealed by God to a Preacher at a time when he complained that he could not well meditate on the Passion." The points are put very briefly and are evidently intended to be drawn out in prayer ; whilst the words learnt by heart and the exterior practices are intended to keep alive the devotion of one who finds a difficulty in meditating.

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Blessed Margaret of Hungary (A.D. 1241-1270) was wont to accompany her prayers with such frequent kissing of the ground and other exterior actions, by which she kept alive the fervour and vigilance of her mind, that the skirt of her habit was torn and ragged at the knees from her constant genuflexions. Of her namesake, Margaret of Ypres (A.D. 1230), we read that she daily recited in addition to the Divine Office a third part of the Psalter and four hundred *Paters* and *Aves*; and it is added: "All these vocal prayers she animated with the interior spirit of mental prayer; and, to do so the more perfectly, at each *Ave Maria* she made a genuflexion, and was often seen to be assisted and supported in so doing by two angels. During these painful exercises her mind was never distracted from mental prayer, wherein she seemed to be wholly absorbed."

There are two other things in regard to the prayers of our Saints and the means used by them to reach the contemplative habit of mind on which we will dwell more particularly, both because they are evidently, like the use of vocal prayer, favourite practices enjoined by Dominican directors, and because they seem to have a special value for those who are living in the midst of active exterior work. The first is the exercise of the presence of God; the second, the use of exterior objects and occupations as a means of prayer.

Of many of our Saints it may be said that the exercise of the presence of God formed their exclusive manner of prayer. It was the chief and favourite devotion of Agnes of Jesus, of whom we read in the same chapter as that quoted above, that her confessor once called upon her to give him an account of her prayer, to which she replied: "I prepare some subject the evening before, and the

thought then presents itself when I wake. The hour of prayer being come, I place myself in the presence of God, and this is enough, for it seems to me that I am then so filled with content in the contemplation of my good Father, that I remain like an infant on its mother's breast ; and so it generally happens that the points I have prepared are of no use ;" whence it is plain that in her humility and simplicity Agnes endeavoured to follow a system of meditation taught her by books or by a director, but that invariably, so soon as she had realised God's presence, contemplative affections at once filled her soul, and the points of meditation became quite needless.

St. Vincent Ferrer in that admirable spiritual treatise which comprises in a few pages such depths of wisdom and experience, directs us to interrupt our ordinary occupations with brief moments of recollection. " We should often," he says, " when we study, close our books and shut our eyes to recollect ourselves and hide for a while within the wounds of Jesus Christ. However exalted may be our understanding, it is well to omit nothing which tends to devotion. From time to time, therefore, address a few words to Jesus Christ. When you have finished what you are doing, or again on leaving your cell for chapter, the choir, or elsewhere, kneel down to make some short fervent prayer." Again, directing us on lying down to rest to entertain ourselves with holy Scripture, after suggesting some points, he adds : " To some in their simplicity it is enough, in the words of Holy Scripture, ' to dwell in the clefts of the rock.' " In his sermon on the Love of God he gives twelve distinct acts or degrees of charity, eight of which are but different ways of realising the divine presence ; and Father Martini, in his Life of the Saint, tells us that this exercise was so

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constant and familiar to him, that never, day or night, in the midst of the busiest labours and the most distracting occupations, was his heart separated from God ; but even in his sleep his thought was still of the Divine Majesty. Often whilst he slept, as well as at other times, his face was seen luminous and beautiful from the effects of the divine presence in his heart ; so that his own words, in speaking of St. Benedict, may be applied to himself : " His heart, enamoured of God, could think of God alone."

St. Catharine's expression in describing what should be our realisation of the presence of God, tells us at once how entirely her own mind was, so to speak, absorbed in this thought. Over and over again we read the same comparison : " We are," she says, " like the fish in the sea." And those other deep and beautiful words in which she is wont to speak of God as " the calm and tranquil sea," have about them something of the character of one who, like Agnes of Jesus, found it enough to place herself in God's presence, and look on Him who satisfied her soul.

Rosa Maria Giannini accustomed herself to prostrate with her face on the ground before prayer and recall the divine presence ; and by this means she acquired such a habit of recollection that nothing had the power to separate her from the thought of God. Again, in the life of Mother Frances of the Seraphim (A.D. 1604-1660) we find some beautiful passages on this exercise, all full of the same simplicity of Spirit. " Is it not wonderful," she writes, " that any soul can be troubled by the absence of God, when indeed He is always to be found in faith ? He is always present in the depths of our soul, and cannot be separated from us. It is just as though we passed the day asleep, if we live without keeping our eyes fixed



on this adorable object." Again she says in a written manifestation : " I made my prayer to-day on a few words I found at the end of your letter : ' God is our home.' I would have that thought present with me to the end of my life." She often gave this direction to her religious children, that, when engaged in active work or unable to give as much time as usual to prayer in the choir or in their cells, they should make up for this loss by a more frequent and vivid exercise of the presence of God, beholding Him in their hearts and often renewing their intention of doing all for His honour. " He who desires to love God must abide in His presence," she writes ; " then he will rest in Him as in his centre ; and this indeed is to share in the life of the Saints, whose blessedness consists in the perpetual vision and presence of God." The chapter in her life on this subject is very beautiful ; and in it we again observe the same preference of simple affections to profound considerations of the understanding. " The soul must not busy itself in making many acts," she says ; " a glance is sufficient." And again, when one of her religious complained to her of difficulties in prayer, her answer is remarkable. " It may be," she writes, " that your sufferings arise from this, that God would draw you by simple faith, and desires you to abandon all your own thoughts and reflections; and so you seem to be losing everything only because you are losing these thoughts. If so, say, ' My God, I desire to adore Thee in Thy spirit, not in my own, and to love Thee for what Thou art, willingly giving up all my own ways of thinking about Thee.' Or perhaps it is that your mind is too active, and works in too hurried a manner. If so, accustom yourself to lessen this activity, and consider that time lost in prayer which is not, for the most part, spent in a patient, humble

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waiting in the presence of God." Few of the lives of our Sisters are more practically useful than this little volume, containing, as it does, so many of his sayings and instructions of one long skilled in the interior life ; and, if we may say so, throughout them all there is discernible the same system of simple, childlike contemplation, to the exclusion of all complicated methods of meditation or exercises of the intellect and imagination in prayer.

If this practice of the presence of God constituted so large a portion of the devout exercises of our religious during the actual time of prayer, it was not less strictly enforced in the midst of active work ; and, to render this the easier, the habit was general among them of making exterior occupations themselves points of meditation. In this way the very things that would otherwise distract were made the means of keeping off distractions ; everything was spiritualised, and everything thus became full of God.

We have before alluded to the practices of Dominica of Paradiso, who, utterly untaught and unlettered, arrived at the most sublime contemplation, as we are expressly told, by this one exercise alone. To revert to the rule of life of Francesca Vacchini, so often quoted, her angel was very minute and particular in his directions on this point. He instructed her how on her way to church in the morning she was to entertain herself with thoughts of the journey of our Blessed Lady to St. Elizabeth or to reflect Whom she was about to visit ; and, if she met any person going or returning, she was to say a Hail Mary for his salvation ; and during the ordinary occupations of the day, " always try," said her angelic teacher, " to have some devout affection ready, suitable to them ; so that, whatever you do, your heart and mind may always

be raised to God. If you lie awake at midnight, let it remind you of the night of the Nativity, and pray Christ, the Sun of Justice, to dispel the darkness of your sins. Never lie down on your bed, till you have made a bed out of the instruments of Christ's Passion, and then repose on His cross and nails and crown." This instruction produced the effects which might have been expected; Francesca, in the midst of a busy life, was engaged in continual contemplation of divine things. Her parents once took her to the public gardens of the Bagnaia, where fountains and all kinds of beautiful objects made the scene one of brilliancy and delight. A bystander, seeing her absorbed in thought, imagined her to be lost in admiration, and said: "It is truly a beautiful garden, is it not, Francesca?" "Paradise is beautiful," she replied; "the fountains of water there refresh the soul; but these are only painted." When she stood by the fire, she thought of the flames of God's love, or of the madness of men who voluntarily cast themselves into the fire of hell. When she was with her Sisters at recreation, she thought of heaven and the eternal consolation to be found in the company of the Saints and angels whom they represented to her mind. "In short," says Father Roberti, "from all that she did or saw, she drew devout and profitable contemplations, thus rising from earthly things to the knowledge of things invisible and divine."

It was the same spirit which taught St. Catharine to see Christ and the Apostles in the person of her parents and family, and which led so many of our Saints, whilst engaged in the work of the refectory, to realise the divine presence in the Sisters whom they served. St. Vincent Ferrer had a way of teaching people how to bring this practice into their acts of charity, and accustomed his

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penitents at Christmas time, if they were rich, to invite an old man, a maiden and a little child to eat with them, as a kind of picture of the Holy Family. There was a wealthy merchant of Valentia who always faithfully followed this advice, and at the hour of his death Jesus, Mary and Joseph stood by his dying bed, and thanked him for his hospitality, and our Lord said to him: "Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of My servants, you have done it unto Me." Bartholomew of the Martyrs, Archbishop of Braga, and one of the Fathers of the Council of Trent, gives us in his episcopal visitations another example of the same spirit. How beautiful is the picture drawn in his life of the holy Bishop riding at the head of his companions, with the reins on his horse's neck, singing psalms to God, and, if the country were rocky and barren, breaking out into appropriate verses from Holy Scripture, which the sights of the wilderness recalled to his mind. Every river was to him a river of the plenteousness of God's gifts; and the sight of the shepherd-boys tending their flocks amid the storms made him weep, as he compared their vigilance over their sheep with what in his humility he called his own negligence and idleness as chief pastor of his people.

Again we read how Blessed Simon Ballachi, the holy lay brother (A.D. 1319), sanctified his labours in the convent garden by making appropriate meditations on every act, "that so, whilst his hands cultivated the herbs and flowers of the earth, his heart might be a paradise of sweet-smelling flowers in the sight of God." In the Life of Mary of Jesus we find abundant mention of her special love of these two exercises of prayer. She often gave the presence of God to her Sisters as the subject of their prayer, and obliged them to make weekly

monthly and yearly examinations on their fidelity to this practice, in order that they might acquire a greater facility in keeping themselves continually in God's presence ; and if she found them greatly defective in this point which she deemed so essential, she gave them severe penances, one of which was " to make them earnestly ask this grace from God with their arms in the form of a cross, with the discipline in their hands and penance in their hearts." To this perpetual sense of God's presence was attributed the admirable external modesty and recollection she exhibited. Again, she taught the lay-sisters frequently to raise their hearts to God when at work by means of ejaculations or the simple remembrance of our Lord's Passion, and for this purpose she particularly used the devotion of the Clock of the Passion. Owing to the continual exhortations by which she led on her children to this recollection and purity of intention, it was scarcely known that any of them ever fell into the common habit of performing ordinary actions as a matter of course. Of her fidelity to prayer a great deal is also said : she was as much an example of the active as of the contemplative character of our Order and in her office of Prioress was overwhelmed with a multitude of affairs ; nevertheless, she never suffered business, even apparently the most important, to disturb the appointed hours of prayer. " Her spiritual directors," it is said, " were often surprised to observe that, in the midst of a constant crowd of visitors, the importunity of the poor and the variety of exterior affairs, she never relaxed in the punctual observance of all spiritual exercises, which she fulfilled as regularly and tranquilly as if living in the desert." There is a passage in her life, moreover, which relates that when in the world she at first gave herself exclusively to active works, but, as her desire of perfection increased and she came to practise

mental prayer, she made it a rule not to allow even charitable offices, unless those of actual necessity, to disturb her in this exercise, and that special temptations on this point cost her considerable difficulty to overcome.

In the beautiful life of Blessed Margaret of Hungary we read much the same thing: "Whatever occupation might oblige her to leave her devotions, whether visits or the calls of charity, she never failed, if forced to break the appointed hours of prayer, to make them up afterwards, and this sometimes with a fidelity which was injurious to her health."

Rosa Maria Giannini, again, of whose life of apostolic labour we have before spoken, and who was at the same time a profound contemplative, made a point of preparing for prayer by a distinct exercise, in which she laid aside and put from her the remembrance of all secular cares. The first bell enjoined by our Constitutions to be rung a few minutes before the beginning of the Office that the Sisters may have time to prepare themselves, has a distinct connection with this making ready of the soul for prayer. "How can the mind be free from images and distractions in prayer," this servant of God was accustomed to say, "if it busies itself in unnecessary affairs. I would go in prayer without any of those noises in my soul which I am sure to get from conversations and things which do not concern me."

The danger which an active life of labour for souls presents of filling our soul with these "noises," as Rose Maria calls them, is acknowledged and pointed out by St. Vincent Ferrer. When he says that evangelical preachers must fear and avoid three things in particular, he puts first exterior distractions, which are inseparable from a busy life. And his practice was conformable to his

precepts; for notwithstanding his enormous amount of business, we are told, he made it a rule to fly from all unnecessary conversations, and found time in the midst of all his labours for such a variety of devotions that his biographers cannot but wonder how he could possibly have got through them all. St. Vincent indeed was so opposed to the making active work and many engagements an excuse for shortening or hurrying our prayers, that he condemns in severe terms some habits in vogue among devout persons of saving time over their prayers by saying them whilst getting up and dressing, and insists on it that we should kneel down and give ourselves leisure to say them reverently and properly. "Never begin your work before your prayers," was one of his maxims to his followers; and another was this: "The love of praising God is a sign of predestination."

These illustrations of the kind of prayer most often described in the lives of our Saints, and of their fidelity to its practice might be indefinitely prolonged and multiplied, and have purposely been selected from the lives of those most distinguished for their active labours; whence we cannot avoid the conclusion that, however great their activity may have been, they felt that their vocation as imperatively called them to the study and practice of contemplative prayer as it did to zeal for souls. The special exercises most dear to them were exactly those most adapted to preserve the spirit of prayer in the midst of an active life, and, so far from their taking active works of charity alone to be enough if unaccompanied with the spirit of prayer, we find all the great apostolic Saints of the Order giving prayer and the habit of prayer a far higher place among the necessary practices they enjoined on their disciples than the most useful evangelical labours. None ever surpassed

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St. Vincent Ferrer in the extent and variety of his work, yet it is he who lays down the law: "The man who would please God must pray all day and all night."

Moreover there is another characteristic of the Saints of our Order, which is not found save in souls which have attained to a contemplative spirit. It is the characteristic of tranquil joy. A soul plunged in distractions and engaged in working for others, if not lifted into a happier and purer atmosphere by interior practices of devotion, could scarcely fail to be saddened, and soured perhaps, by a great press of exterior work. Everything would tend to depress and secularise it: the sight and knowledge of so much evil, the ceaseless engagement of time, the continual interruptions to its own quiet and silence. Nevertheless, let us see how unlike the lives of our greatest Saints are to that busy, bustling and anxious character which might be looked for in those whose days were spent in labour. Selecting only a few of our active Saints, we will give their pictures in the words of their biographers, and let our readers judge if they do not read like those of contemplatives in heart and affection.

And, first, of St. Dominic himself. The words of the Blessed Cecilia are familiar to all of us; she tells us of the radiant light that played upon his forehead, and how he was always joyous and agreeable, save when the trouble of others touched him to compassion. Father Paul of Venice, and in similar words all the witnesses of Bologna, say: "He was never seen either angry, or disturbed, or vexed during his journeys, but was ever patient, and joyful in adversity. He was always calm and serene," says another, "amiable and beloved by all."

Of St. Catharine, again, to whom, when a child, the neighbours gave the name of Euphrosyne, because of the



joyous beauty which was so attractive in her, it is said: "During all her life of suffering her countenance always remained serene, sweet and affable; and during her last illness, when she was reduced almost to a skeleton, her face was fresh and cheerful even to the moment of her death."

Of Agatha of the Cross we read: "The principal fruit she derived from her prayers was that she acquired a peace which nothing, however contrary to her inclinations, had the power to disturb. She was accustomed to say that, when she wished to banish sadness either from her heart or her face, she had but to think of God, and the joy returned; for she was immediately plunged as it were in the remembrance of His infinite mercy." Sister Anna Sanz (A.D. 1580), a lay-sister, whose austerities were almost excessive, drew, nevertheless, such sweetness from the Cross that the Prioress made her infirmarian, in order that her joyous, happy face might be a consolation and encouragement to the sick. Austerity and joy are, indeed, ever found side by side in the lives of the Saints. It is written of the Blessed Benvenuta (A.D. 1254-1292) that in the midst of her penances she had such a happy face that no one believed her as mortified as she was. Again, after the account of the austerities practised by Blessed Columba (A.D. 1469-1501) we read: "Nevertheless, she was always to be seen with a fresh and beautiful colour, her countenance smiling, her eyes sweet and lustrous, her whole person with a certain angelic joy expressed upon it." And so of many others; but the picture of one in particular is so minutely given that we will select it as the example and type of all the rest. It is that of Mary of Jesus, of whom we read: "No one ever observed any precipitation in her manner, or any movement of passion in her words;

nor, in the greatest press of business, was the slightest trouble or vexation visible in any of her actions. Her continual recollection of the presence of God was visible in the exterior serenity, peace and tranquillity which beamed in her countenance. Nothing ever disturbed or saddened its expression, not even when she was suffering interiorly, by reason of the entire confidence with which she abandoned herself into the hands of God. . . . To this exercise of the presence of God we must attribute the rare modesty observable in her outward deportment. She was always composed and tranquil, her eyes cast down, her arms becomingly folded, her habit decently arranged, every posture of her body preaching a lesson of religious modesty. Prosperity never elated her, and adversity had no power to disturb the unalterable peace and tranquillity of her heart, united, as it invariably was, to the will of God, and desiring neither more nor less than what He should ordain."

"The secret of Agatha's tranquillity and peace," says the biographer of Agatha of the Cross, "was this: she had formed the habit of shutting herself up in the bosom of God; there she lived, worked, prayed and slept." Rosa Maria Giannini, whose interior life was often that of the Cross in its most utter desolation, and whose exterior occupations were unceasing, had, it is said, "a very joyous and cheerful disposition by nature, and this was increased by grace, so that she drew to her the hearts of all whom she addressed. A smile was ever on her lips; and she was kind and condescending to every one's needs."

In the illustrations given in this chapter we have said very little of the extraordinary graces and supernatural favours enjoyed by our Saints in their intercourse with God, confining ourselves chiefly to examples more easy of imitation. But are not these enough to prove our point? Are

not these holy souls contemplatives in the truest sense of the word,—contemplatives in the midst of apostolic labours? And is there not, moreover, a distinct character discernible in the spirit of their contemplation, a character of freedom and simplicity, mounting up to high things by very plain and easy steps, by vocal prayer, the familiar contemplation of the Passion, and the hourly exercise of the presence of God? “In all things God,” was the sentence inscribed in the cloister of one of our convents; and it was doubtless intended to remind the religious, as they went to and fro, of the spirit which was to animate their work and turn it into prayer.

In concluding this part of our subject we cannot do better than give the portrait of a good religious as drawn by St. Catharine herself, that we may see how deeply the necessity of prayer, silence, recollection and the virtues of an interior contemplative life are enjoined by her whose soul was consumed by ceaseless zeal for souls:—“The true spouse of Christ delights in seeking Him Who is her Spouse, not in the company of others, but in the knowledge of herself: there she finds Him; there, tasting and knowing the goodness of the Eternal Spouse in herself, she loves Him with all her heart and all her soul; and she is content to abide upon the Cross, and to acquire the virtues of perfection through much labour and suffering rather than with ease and without pain, in order the more to conform herself to the likeness of her crucified Lord. Her study is of prayer and watching; and of her cell,”\* she says in

\* This expression, *Della cella si fa un cielo*, loses its force in English; it is a play on words borrowed from old monastic writers, who constantly delight in comparing heaven and the cell of a religious, in allusion to the similarity between the two words *Cælum* (heaven), and *Cella* (cell).

another letter, "she makes her home with her Eternal Spouse, and prays always with those holy and fervent desires which are a continual prayer."

Finally, let us add the warning of one of our own greatest ascetic writers, Lewis of Granada (A.D. 1504-1589), who, enumerating the various dangers which beset the spiritual life, places first on his list "a too great love of outward affairs, which deprive the soul of the inward visits and consolations of God;" for "no man," he says, "can find *without* what he ought to seek *within* himself;" and St. Vincent Ferrer's maxim, so startling from the lips of one who never seemed to have a moment to himself, "A man, if he would serve God, must pray always, by night and by day."

## CHAPTER IV

### MAGNANIMITY

**I**T may perhaps seem a little presumptuous to lay claim to any particular virtue as belonging to one Institute rather than to another ; when, therefore, magnanimity is spoken of as belonging to the spirit of the Dominican Order, this is not meant as if it belonged to no other, or were in any exclusive way taught or brought out by our Rule. Nevertheless, the more we study the lives of our Saints, the more we must be struck by the family likeness they all bear to one another ; and, just in the same way as in drawing their character we speak of their zeal for souls and their contemplative prayer without in any way wishing to raise an exclusive claim to these virtues, we must add, to complete the picture, that lofty heroism of soul which runs through them all, and which is in some sort needful to realize the ideal type of a child of St. Dominic. And this will not appear fanciful, if we consider that the vocation of a Dominican almost seems to require some such elevation of character. It needs greatness of heart to be an Apostle : the readiness to brave all difficulties, to suffer all privations, ever to seek the highest and greatest good, and to spend oneself for Christ. St. Dominic avowedly through his whole life took the Apostle St. Paul for his master and model, and it is evident how the imitation of the great Doctor of the Gentiles influenced the whole character of his mind. Neither is it less remarkable how St. Catharine, who in all things was filled with the spirit of her Order, caught exactly the same tone in her

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devotion to St. Paul: she never speaks of him in her writings save in terms of extraordinary love and reverence, as "the champion of God," the "glorious standard-bearer of Christ." And this feeling of soldiership and high enthusiasm in the cause of God was the heritage of all her children, who never seem to have forgotten the name borne by the Third Order in the first days of its institution of "the Militia of Jesus Christ."

If we consider St. Dominic's whole career, it is full of this character of heroism, not a self-asserting heroism which made a great figure before the world, but a certain holy daring, which prompted him to undertake works in the face of what seemed insurmountable difficulties. What could the world have thought of his very first beginning when he set to work to evangelise Europe with sixteen companions, sending them two and two into the different countries of the earth? It was always the same: two Friar-Preachers were enough to establish the Order in a new locality; and no sooner had a community been formed than it was dispersed. Again, the whole story of St. Hyacinth's vocation and mission to Poland, and of his after labours through vast and unknown regions, reads like a romance; and chivalry can show no finer or more inspiring incident than that in the Chronicles of the Friar-Preachers, where the young stranger prostrates himself at the feet of Dominic and offers to be the Apostle of the Northern world. The boundless confidence in God displayed by all these great Saints was of the same character; the sons of Dominic went forth, having literally neither scrip nor purse, but a staff only. There was no question of prudence or calculation of worldly prospects, but the simple and heroic trust that God would provide. In the history of St. Peter, Martyr (A.D. 1205-1252), we find the same feeling. All

his life he had prayed in the Mass for martyrdom ; and on the morning of his death, knowing that his last day was come, he set out to meet his assassins with a joyous heart as one thirsting for the martyr's crown. He received their blows upon his breast and his uplifted forehead ; and, when words failed him, the *Credo*, written in his blood, testified to his faith with the last breath of life.

St. Catharine's character is essentially of the same cast. When the Ghibelline faction of Florence, enraged at her negotiations for the restoration of peace, rushed through the streets with hideous cries, shouting, "Death to Catharine, death to the enemy of the republic," she, hearing the noise, arose with her usual calm sweet smile, and went into the garden behind the house, as her manner was, to pray. But a mob of the Ciombi or wool-combers attacked the house ; they were armed with halberts and bludgeons, and they broke in the doors, still crying, "Death to Catharine ! Where is the wretched woman ?" Then she went to meet them as tranquilly as though she were going to a banquet rather than to a cruel death, and, kneeling before the leader of the band, replied : "Catharine is here ; do with her what God permits : but in His name I command you to suffer these," pointing to her companions, "to go their way." The ruffians dropped their weapons, and the leader turned his head away to hide his shame and emotion.

In the revolution of Siena she appeared on the scaffold to comfort and assist the victim of the dominant party ; her letter describing the death-scene of Nicholas Tuldo is too well known to require insertion. Again, when by the decision of Pope Gregory and of St. Catharine of Sweden, who was to have accompanied her to Naples, she was finally forbidden to undertake the mission to Queen Joanna

on account of the personal dangers to which she would be exposed, how noble was the expression of her regret ! “ She turned to me,” says Blessed Raymund, “ with eyes filled with tears, saying : ‘ If Agnes, and Margaret, and countless other illustrious Virgins had thought in this way, they would never have gained the martyr’s crown. Have we not a Spouse Who can deliver us from the hands of our enemies ? These fears are unworthy and are inspired less by prudence than by distrust.’ ” Forbidden to brave the tigress in her den, she consoled herself by writing to her ; and probably a bolder or more inspired remonstrance with vice was never penned than the letter which she despatched to the Queen of Naples. When this failed and war was declared against Joanna, Catharine sent another letter to Charles Durazzo, the chief of the forces of the Church, which stirs one’s heart like a trumpet-blast. “ Is it not grief enough,” she writes, “ to see the faith forsaken and denied, to see the Divine Lamb pursued by wolves, and the Spouse of Christ dismembered ? Is there a heart which these things cannot melt, an eye that can remain dry and tearless ? Yet the hearts of the princes of men are hardened in self-love ; yours only has the divine goodness touched ; and He has called you to the succour of His Spouse. Come promptly, therefore ; do not delay ; and God will be with you. I know you will be brave and loyal, and will devote yourself to the will of God, forgetting yourself, for otherwise you will do nothing ; therefore was it that I said I desired to see you a brave and noble knight ; and so I pray you to be, for the love of our crucified Lord. Shame upon the coldness of the princes of the world ! I speak severely, but the love of Holy Church must be my excuse.”

Catharine, however, was an extraordinary woman, raised



up in extraordinary times. It is not to be expected that all should inherit her heroic spirit, nor are we called upon to render the public services to Church and State which fell to her lot. But in one of her children, the sweetest, most hidden and most womanly of them all, we find, when occasion called it forth, a flash of the same generous ardour and contempt of death and danger. In the month of August, 1615, a powerful fleet of the States General of Holland appeared off the coast of Peru. Everyone in Lima was in tears ; nothing was to be heard but the cries of women and children, whilst the men hurried in confusion and disorder to prepare for battle. Then St. Rose, in the midst of the general consternation, thought only how she might in the coming struggle offer her life in defence of the Blessed Sacrament, for she looked on the Dutch only as the enemies of Jesus Christ, and not as the foes of her country. The Adorable Sacrament was exposed in all the churches of the city ; and Rose, animating her companions with the like enthusiasm, hastened to the Dominican church, and, ascending the steps of the altar, determined to fight and die in defence of her Lord and Spouse. " From her sparkling eyes, her lofty air and the tone of her voice, which was that of a heroine exhorting the troops to combat, you might have taken her for a Christian Minerva," says her biographer, " or for an angry lioness, which rushes on the weapons of the hunters to defend its little ones." Here she was found on the altar steps where she had resolved to die, when the news was brought of the sudden departure of the fleet. In the midst of the universal joy Rose alone seemed sad : she had missed the martyrdom for which she daily prayed. In the same spirit she would gaze for hours at the distant mountains of Peru and exclaim with tears, " Would to God I might go to the barbarians,

and give my blood for Jesus, my Lord and Spouse." Then there is the story of Sister Raphael of Faenza, who, when the mob of Spanish soldiers broke into her convent at Prato in A.D. 1512, advanced alone to meet them, and by the calm majesty of her courageous demeanour succeeded in saving her community from insult and in converting its assailants into protectors,—an episode hardly to be surpassed in the records of Christian heroism.

Again, Catharine of Herrera, awakened at night by the clash of swords, with the same chivalrous instinct rises from her bed and descends to the streets where a midnight duel is being fought, and throwing herself, at the risk of her life, between the swords of the combatants, she separates and then reconciles them.

But, it may be said, it is the occasion that makes the heroine ; and happily everyone is not thrown on days of revolution and civil war. In reply to which we answer, it is the magnanimity and the devoted courage, and not the romance or the picturesque incident we are holding out for imitation ; and these can often be displayed in the course of the quietest and most ordinary life. This is not the place to show why this quality of courage is given so eminent a place. St. Teresa somewhere has a saying to the effect that, what humility is to ordinary souls, courage is to those who are seeking perfection ; and if this be so, and if it be also a marked feature in the character of our Order, it is sufficient to justify us in introducing illustrations of it into this little sketch. Of courage under physical sufferings we shall not here speak at length, as it seems rather included under the head of exterior austerity ; and yet it is as well perhaps to allude to it, because, of all ways in which we are likely to be called on to exhibit greatness of heart, the patient endurance of pain, sickness and priva-

tion is the most certain to be one day or other our lot. There is the history of one of our Sisters, Isabella of St. Benedict (A.D. 1550), in whom this kind of courage was remarkable. Obligated to submit to the most dreadful surgical operations without any of the alleviations which modern science has devised, she never uttered a sigh but kept her eyes calmly fixed on the crucifix. She succeeded in overcoming the violence of her sufferings even to the last hour of her life, when she attended in choir with the other Sisters, who knew nothing of the pain she was silently enduring, and expired at the foot of the crucifix, as she was making a profound inclination. Of another Sister, Gertrude of St. Dominic, it is said that, though her life was a long martyrdom of suffering, at the hour of death she gave thanks to God that never once by reason of bodily anguish or infirmity had she allowed cowardice, weariness or pain to keep her back from choir or prayer ; “ for her courage,” says the author of her Life, “ had made a life happy and joyous which to others would have been an insupportable torment.” Not to multiply instances of this kind, it is well for us to recall to mind the fact that one of our beatified Saints, Blessed Maria Bartolomea Bagnesi (A.D. 1514-1577), was entirely and exclusively sanctified by the endurance of sickness. Her life, beautiful and spiritual in the highest degree, is nothing but the story of a sick room, and this invalid of forty years is now raised to the altars of the Church. Speaking of the Venerable Mother Anne of Albuquerque (A.D. 1535-1610), a Tertiary of extraordinary devotion, Père de Réchac says: “ I do not hesitate to regard as a special effect of her gift of prayer that manly and martial spirit which distinguished her and freed her from all those idle fears from which even men sometimes suffer.” And if the word “ manly ” may seem inappro-

priate, let us remind ourselves of our seraphic Mother's favourite expression constantly recurring in her letters, in which she exhorts her correspondents to be *virile e sciocco*, manly and free. Mother Anne was accustomed to watch all alone by the dead at night, and when asked if she were never afraid at such times, her reply was : " Why should I fear ? the dead can do me no harm." And when a band of Moors ravaged the country, and all the inhabitants fled in terror at their approach, Anne refused to take flight and retired to her chamber to pray and trust in God.

In the life of St. Rose of Lima we read that, as a child, she had inherited from her mother a great fear of ghosts and of being left alone in the dark. To overcome it she used to retire into dark and solitary places to give herself to prayer. One very dark evening she had remained in the garden praying till an advanced hour. Her mother came to seek her, accompanied by her father, for she was afraid to come alone. Rose heard them approaching, and said to herself : " My mother crosses the garden without fear, because my father is with her : and shall I be afraid of the darkness, having my heavenly Bridegroom always at hand ? I cannot see Him at my side ; but He is in my heart. My mother puts her trust in a mortal man and fears no danger when he is with her ; and shall I tremble when my Saviour is with me ?" This simple reflection cured her for ever of all her fears ; from that moment she was afraid of nothing. She gave innumerable proofs of this courage inspired by confidence in God. When she was about twelve years old, she was one day out with her mother and brothers, when a mad bull, which had broken loose, rushed towards them. Doña Flores wished to take flight with her children, but Rose urged the whole party to stand still, and the infuriated animal rushed past without

appearing to see them. Whilst the others were still trembling, Rose betrayed no signs of emotion and calmly remarked: "Let us quietly rely on the assistance of God when danger threatens us and human help is wanting."

We may find in the life of Elvira of Jesus an example to encourage us in another kind of fear—nocturnal alarms. One night her community was roused by a hideous and unaccountable noise. The Sisters all ran hither and thither in great confusion; Elvira alone descended to the spot whence the noise proceeded. On her return she simply said: "Such a one," naming him, "is about to be stabbed; pray for his soul." On the following morning news arrived of the murder of the person she had named; and it was thought that this extraordinary noise had been permitted in order to secure the prayers of the community for the unfortunate man.

Of this higher courage of confidence in God we should require a separate volume to treat worthily; and it is perhaps of a different character from the magnanimity with which we began: whilst another kind of courage, that, namely, in which nature has to be overcome in the service of revolting sicknesses, is disagreeable in its details, however noble in its heroism. Of this St. Catharine is the most distinguished example—and yet we are scarcely justified in saying the most distinguished, seeing how large a number of her children have trodden in her footsteps. And, though we will spare ourselves the details of those services whose ignominy will be so glorious and beautiful in heaven, we cannot but particularize the humility and heroic fervour of one whose character is perhaps more exquisitely preserved in her biography than that of any other of our beatified Saints,—I mean Blessed Margaret of Hungary.

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The story of her services in the infirmary may be painful to our refinement ; yet, when we remember that she who thus abased herself was a princess of royal blood, and that all she did was done in the effort to find new ways in which she could imitate the abasement and condescension of her Divine Spouse, how beautiful does the story of her humiliations become ! Blessed Margaret was one in whom the courageous fervour of spirit of which we speak was very remarkable also in other ways. She had an intense desire of martyrdom, and when the acts of the martyrs were read aloud, her whole soul thrilled with a noble enthusiasm. She would rise and exclaim : “ Why did we not live in those days, my Sisters ? Oh ! would to God we might be cut limb from limb for the faith of Christ ! ” One day she was told that the Tartars were about to re-enter Hungary. “ I pray God,” she replied, “ that my father’s kingdom may be spared so terrible a scourge ; nevertheless, if they are to come, I trust they may come here, that we may receive our crown from their hands.” Doubtless, coming from ordinary lips, such words might be counted presumptuous ; “ but Blessed Margaret,” adds her biographer, “ was a true martyr in spirit ; and, unable to die for God on the scaffold, she made for herself a longer martyrdom of the Cross.” She never bowed at the *Gloria Patri* without offering her life to God for the faith ; and once during this act she was permitted to realize the sacrifice so intensely as actually to feel the executioner’s stroke upon her neck.

Catharine of Herrera was more than once beaten in the streets when pursuing her service of the poor, and gives us an example of courage and perseverance in exterior works of charity which comes forcibly home to ourselves. Of courage and constancy in the religious vocation there is a story given of Mary of St. Bernard, who had come to Spain

from the Canary Islands with her three children, the youngest of whom was but three years old. Touched by a powerful call from God, she abandoned them without hesitation, and entered the Convent of Seville. At the grating the little boy came to bid her adieu. "Mother," he said, "to whom do you leave me? Who will take care of me now?" "Jesus Christ," she replied. "He will be your Father, and Mary will be your Mother. Obey them, and all will be well." The child seemed to receive courage from her reply—he smiled and went away, drying his tears; nor did his mother fail to receive the reward of her sacrifice; for her boy, whilst still almost a child, entered her own Order, and died soon after in the odour of sanctity.

What must have been the courage and constancy of Blessed Lucy of Narni (A.D. 1476-1544) during those eight-and-thirty years of abandonment and disgrace, when she was looked upon as an imposter, and which ended only with her life! Yet it is said that her soul never once gave way beneath the pressure of that heavy cross. Frances of St. Dominic was shown in a vision a heap of burning coals, which was explained to signify the persecutions and afflictions in store for her, to which her only reply was: "I am ready to walk through the midst of them barefoot." Mary of Jesus took particular care to cultivate this generous fervour in her novices; she was wont to say that without it there was an end to perfection, and that nothing is so displeasing in God's eyes as cowardice in His service. Hence, when she saw any of her Sisters pusillanimous, and given to complain of difficulties or discomforts, she never ceased her efforts till she had inspired her with a different spirit, and would profess none till she was satisfied that they had generous and magnanimous hearts. "She made open war," says her biographer, "on the idle and the

cowardly, and in chapter she was wont to cast fire and flames on their heads." "Do not creep on the ground," she would say familiarly, "but lift up your heart and your hope to heaven; for, if you can do nothing, God can do all things." "The body murmurs sometimes," she would remark, "but go on bravely and do not heed it. We should never have done, if we were once to begin to listen to what it says."

To speak of extraordinary and supernatural instances of this spirit, we may say in general that the whole tone of those narratives which tell of the encounters of our Saints with Satan, breathes of this heroism in a remarkable degree. Magdalen Angelica, whose bodily constitution was weak and delicate, and whose courage was not natural but wholly of grace, and who, we are told, trembled all over at the mortifications she yet compelled herself to practise, was met one day, as she was going to Communion, by a strange sight—an armed company barred the way to the altar with drawn swords, which they held at her throat. A moment sufficed to show her the artifice of the devil; she steadily walked in amongst the phantoms, pushed aside the swords, and passed unharmed. As to Frances of St. Dominic, she showed herself as good as her promise above recorded; for, when the persecutions figured by the burning coals came upon her and the evil spirits made her their sport, she seized one who appeared in bodily shape and trampled him beneath her feet. Of Blessed Catharine of Raconigi it is said: "She cared no more for devils than for a swarm of flies." And Blessed Benvenuta, the sweetest and most spiritual of contemplatives, who was said by her Sisters to be so lovable in her holiness, whose look, and touch, and presence inspired gladness and drove away temptations,—this gentle loving Saint was a very Judith



with the evil one. She beat him "like a horse-boy;" and, when he appeared in the form of a gigantic serpent, and she felt his horrible folds moving over her bed, she took hold of the intruder and dashed him against the wall. Her courage was shown in other ways as well; for, when she lay overpowered by an accumulation of bodily sufferings without once uttering a complaint, and some one expressed wonder at her constancy, she smiled and said, "One can have one's paradise but once." Nor was she ever known to lose her gaiety and cheerfulness in the midst of her long agony.

What a depth of Christian heroism was there in the reply of Magdalen Redon to her son, who, as she was about to place him at school among the Jesuits, declared he would starve himself to death: "My child," she replied, "I would rather see you young in paradise than old in hell!"

Blessed Clara of Pisa was another of the heroines of the Order. In one day a popular revolution deprived her of her father and three brothers, all massacred by the rival faction. Laurence, her youngest brother, escaped, and came, covered with wounds, to the door of his sister's convent, to implore that he might take refuge within the enclosure; but Clara would not break the law of the Church or her own vow even at the sight of his tears and blood; she would only consent to his being received into a house belonging to the community, where he soon afterwards expired. In the midst of these calamities and struggles with nature, Blessed Clara lost nothing of her resignation and constancy. When the news reached her that Laurence, too, was dead, she only raised her eyes to heaven and said: "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be His Name!" Afterwards, when the family of Appiani the assassin were themselves in

danger and almost perishing from hunger, Clara gave them hospitality and saved them from death. And with touching delicacy she laid herself under a trifling obligation to Appiani, to show him her forgiveness ; for, being ill and in want of strengthening food, it was to him she sent, begging for a little nourishment ; and this act of humility so overcame the fierce noble that it entirely changed his heart.

We must include in these illustrations of heroism Bartholomew of the Martyrs, the great Archbishop of Braga, whose episcopal palace was once attacked in the middle of the night by a furious mob. He was writing, and never stirred or spoke as the windows were dashed in by stones and the cries of the infuriated populace grew louder every moment. His trembling attendants ventured to beg him to retire, but he imposed silence on them ; and, whilst the clamour raged without, nothing was heard within but his pen moving over the paper. At length some of the mob mounted to the windows, and shouted their execrations in his ears. " Villain," they cried, " thief, heretic !" At that last word Bartholomew pushed aside his table and papers, and went to the window, cast back shutters and curtains, and appeared before the crowd. "*That*, at least, I am not," he said. " You may call me what you list ; but, sinner as I am, I thank God I am a faithful son of Holy Church." As often happens, his courageous demeanour quelled the fury of his enemies ; and the crowd dispersed without doing further mischief.

We read in the life of Blessed Margaret of Savoy that our Lord once appeared to her and showed her three darts, on which were inscribed the words " calumny," " sickness" and " temptations," and said to her : " Daughter, choose which one of these thou wilt accept, and thou shalt be written in the book of life." For a moment she hesitated ;

then courageously yielded to the whispered counsel of an Angel: "Leave the choice to God." And, in return for her abandonment to His will, she received all three. Yet more heroic was the choice of St. Catharine, who took the thorny crown from the hands of our Lord and pressed it forcibly on her brow, as we read in the history of her life.

Francesca Vacchini had, like Blessed Margaret of Hungary, a great desire of martyrdom, and her earnest cravings after suffering were answered by many strange afflictions. She once said to her confessor, "Father, if you see me suffer, it is because God wills me to feel the pain of these trials to give me occasion of merit, but never think that my heart does not endure them gladly." Once, as she prayed, Jesus showed himself to her as a child loaded with a heavy cross and apparently spent with suffering and fatigue. "Francesca," He said, "wilt thou not help Me to carry this?" "Willingly," was her reply. "Thou wilt then bear it willingly?" He asked again, and again she answered, "Yes, Lord, by Thy grace." "Tell Me," again said the Divine Child, "if thou shouldst see any way of escaping from it, wouldst thou not lay it down?" "That will I not," she replied with fervour. "Know then," said the Divine Child, "that thy fervour refreshes Me as much as if thou wert really helping to carry My cross; for thou art ready to do it joyfully and with a good will." "Once," says her confessor, "I asked her to tell me which among all her sorrows was the greatest. 'Ah! Father,' she replied, 'there is none so great as the thought that I do not love and serve our Lord aright.'" In her penances she exhibited the like generosity of spirit. A certain religious, knowing what were Sister Francesca's practices in this respect, once asked her advice. "Sister Francesca," he said, "how shall I do penance for my sins? I know it is needful, but I fear for

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my health." "Father," she replied, "love God ardently and that fear will vanish. We must use discretion in austerity. Nevertheless, one thing is certain : God knows how to preserve our health, just as He knows how to deprive us of it ; and we must trust in Him."

St. Vincent Ferrer gives us a definition of fortitude which he amply illustrated in his life. "When," he says, "the will, the memory and the understanding and all the powers are regulated according to God's law, and we do not care for what men say, but look only to fulfil the will of God, then will our actions be strong and virtuous." And if, as Father Teoli says, "it is an integral part of the virtue of fortitude to undertake great things, and with a generous heart to persevere in them till they are accomplished, St. Vincent may surely be considered a perfect example of this virtue ; for his whole life was passed in the effort to reform not one province or one country, but the entire world." "Magnanimity," says the same author, "was the singular and special grace of St. Vincent. One of his favourite sayings was : 'A timid man will never do any good.'"

If there be one virtue more constantly inculcated in the teaching of St. Catharine than another, it is this of magnanimity. She bids us "walk on without faltering, never turning our heads aside or looking back ; but, as valiant champions of the faith, persevering in humble prayer ; and with a free and generous heart following in the steps of Christ Crucified ;" whilst almost all her colloquies with our Lord begin by that exhortation to dilate our hearts and enlarge our desires which is of a kindred spirit ; for, as she tells us in another place, "it is the soul of great desires that can alone accomplish great things or attain to perfect love."

There is yet another kind of courage—that, namely,

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which is exhibited in penitential exercises, which we will consider in a future chapter. We cannot better conclude this subject of magnanimity than by once more reminding our readers that it was one of the most distinguished features in the character of our Holy Father St. Dominic. Those who are familiar with his life will readily recall innumerable instances of his greatness of soul ; we will content ourselves here with recording only the lofty and heroic answer which he gave to the heretics, when they asked him what he would have done if he had fallen into their hands at the time they were seeking his life. " I would have prayed you," he said, " not to have taken my life at a single blow, but little by little, cutting off each member of my body, one by one ; and, when you had done that you should have plucked out my eyes, and then have left me so, to prolong my torments and gain me a richer crown."

## CHAPTER V

### REGULAR OBSERVANCE

THE prologue attached to our Constitutions, before entering on a particular explanation of these things commanded by our Rule, enforces the necessity of a strict and uniform observance of every ordinance, as well those enjoined under precept as those seemingly of little consequence, appointed only "for the adornment and beauty of regular life." Devotion to their Rule and fidelity to the least of its requirements have been universal among the Saints of the Order ; and their loyalty to it, although it is not binding under sin, is doubtless sufficiently justified by the excellence of those Constitutions, of which a Sovereign Pontiff has said that it was enough for the canonization of a Dominican religious to prove that he had observed them. But this love of their rule has been with some the distinctive characteristic of their sanctity ; and, just as we find Saints raised up for the particular manifestation of the heroic degrees of other virtues, such as humility, or mortification, or zeal for souls, so there are some in whom regular observance was the predominant virtue and beyond all doubt the direct means of their sanctification. Thus we read of one religious who had lived for twenty-five years in the Order in the practice of strict obedience to its minutest rules, that the thought which had been uppermost in life found expression in death. "I thank God," he said, "that during the twenty-five years I have worn this habit, I have not drunk out of the refectory, or except at dinner and supper above five times."

Father Matthew of Covessa (A.D. 1630) kept his rule with the utmost strictness throughout the whole of a long sea-voyage to the Philippine Islands, during which his hours of silence, prayer and work went on with the same regularity as if he had been in the quiet of his convent. But he was perhaps surpassed in this by some of our Sisters, who exhibited a like fidelity under yet more trying circumstances. Eleven of the Tertiaries of the congregation of Toulouse had undertaken a pilgrimage to Notre Dame de Guarezon, and were placed under the conduct of Sister Magdalen de Redon during the time of the journey. As soon as they set out she took her watch in her hand and declared that they must allow it to be their guide and master, for that she did not intend to make the smallest alteration in any of the hours or rules of their community life. To this resolution she exactly adhered. Chapter was held and a regular distribution of time was assigned to each one ; the watch gave the sign for silence, recreation, office or meditation ; and in no case did the interruptions of the journey cause any of their usual exercises to be broken off or negligently performed. The same thing is related of a namesake of hers, Sister Magdalen Orsini (A.D. 1534-1605), who, setting out with two Sisters for Rome, where they were about to found a house of strict observance, would not allow of any relaxation of discipline on the road. They always had reading during their meals and sang the usual grace. They also sang Matins, and heard Mass every morning.

The lives of some of the early Dominican missionaries in America exhibit an astonishing fidelity to the Constitutions of their Order. Pass from one to another, and in the midst of labours and sufferings which rival those of the Apostles, the precision of their observance is to be found

still as exact as in the most regular monastery. Father Dominic Salazar (A.D. 1594) remained on the missions of New Spain for forty years ; and during that time his observance was so uniform and punctual that it was held as a certain thing that he never once broke even the most trivial ordinance of his Rule. It mattered little what these regulations were in themselves ; and perhaps faithful hearts clung with more fondness to those of less importance, the observance of which could only derive its value from the virtue of obedience. " Take both hands," were the last words of a dying Sister, to whom the Infirmarian was offering a cup, holding it to her mouth with one hand instead of two, as is enjoined by our Rule. A long habit of exactness made the accidental infringement of this trifling regulation painful enough to rouse her from the lethargy of mortal sickness.

Of Sister Mary of the Presentation, a religious of the Convent of Our Lady of Grace at Seville, it is said : " She had ever in her mouth the sentence dictated by the Holy Spirit, ' He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little ' " (*Ecc'ius*. xix. 1) ; and her sister in religion, Sister Mary of the Purification, was wont to address the following words to her religious : " Children, you should have as great a scruple of breaking the least of these commands as of committing a sacrilege."

Nevertheless there was one case in which dispensations were allowed and even enjoined : and that was when the rigorous adherence to the letter might hinder the greater fruit of souls, the Order of Preachers being, as the Constitutions declare, " established for teaching and preaching, and to save souls by communicating to others the fruits of contemplation." " A Friar-Preacher," said Blessed Jordan, the second Master-General of the Order



(A.D. 1190-1236), "has three things to do: to live well, to learn and to teach;" and Blessed Humbert, the fifth Master-General, in his letter to the Order in A.D. 1255, sketches its apostolic character in noble and animated terms: "Rouse yourselves, my Brethren," he says, "you who are called by God; and let us consider a little the example of the Apostles. Were they not all men of Galilee? And yet behold them pilgrims and wanderers in every country of the world. But some of you will say: 'We are weak and cannot do like them.' But I say, woe be to us if we are called Friar-Preachers, and are not ready to tread in their steps. Tell me, I pray you, what thoughts of repose had our first Fathers, not those only who had grown old in religion, but the very novices whom St. Dominic sent forth. Therefore let not us who are chosen and elect of God give place in our hearts to thoughts so low and base; but, fixing our eyes on the vocation of our profession and the rewards of obedience, let us offer ourselves with joy to every kind of labour for the salvation of souls and the greater glory of Christ." Yet this vigorous and spirited call to labour is accompanied by an earnest exhortation "not to relax the rigours of the Order." "Let us occupy ourselves," he adds, "in continual prayer, satisfying the Divine Office with diligence and devotion, religious in our silence, and peaceable with all." And, if we turn to the example of those first Fathers of whom he speaks, we shall see that these men, most fervent in their apostolic labours, did not certainly consider a dispensation from Rule or relaxation of the religious character a necessary condition for working for souls. We will content ourselves with one extract from Castiglio's History, which may show us in what sense religious observance was understood by the first

missionaries of the Order. After enumerating the austerities of the Rule he goes on in these words : " Nevertheless these first disciples did not rest content with this, but strove with a holy emulation which should most perfectly imitate their saintly Master. As, after the Ascension of our Lord, the Holy Ghost descended on His disciples, moving them to go preaching through the world, inflaming them with the love of souls, strengthening them to endure all sufferings and fatigues, even so, after the death of St. Dominic, the holy Patriarch seemed to have obtained for his children the gift of the same Divine Spirit ; so that, burning with His holy flames, they shed abroad a heavenly light over the whole world. They had no other thought than that of sacrificing their own wills to God in such sort as that with them they offered and annihilated also their bodies, souls, life, thoughts and desires, making all a perfect holocaust, so that they were wholly consumed for God's honour and reserved nothing for themselves. They kept such a guard on their hearts that they gave themselves no time to grow slack and tepid. They made no account of the pleasures of the world. When they thought of it, it was to weep over the sins they had committed there. They came to the recital of the Divine Office with a joy which made them feel that it was of itself enough to console them in all their hardships. Their love of the Divine Sacrament of the altar was such that at no hour of the day or night was the church ever seen empty ; there were always a number of religious scattered here and there, visiting the altars or praying in retired corners. Some wept, some sighed, others prayed and meditated ; all made sweet music to the ears of God. Compline was their favourite hour, and the one to which they looked forward, as beginning their night prayers, when they could

enjoy the sweets of uninterrupted silence and devotion. Then might be heard the sound of their terrible disciplines ; for in those days the blood of St. Dominic was still fresh within them ; his scourge, dyed in his own gore, was still to be seen, and to see it alone was enough to animate and yet to humble them. And then, as each one could best arrange, they began their long and profound devotions ; some kneeling, some leaning against the walls or standing, others prostrate on the ground. The sound of their sighs and tears filled the church and moved many a one who witnessed them to go and weep also with the servants of Christ. Thus the night passed, until it was time for them to go and take a little rest before Matins ; nor was the rising for Matins difficult to them, for they slept in their habits, and on a little straw, and they were but too happy to rise, and come back to prayer. From this spirit of prayer there arose such a peace and conformity of hearts among them, that it was like that of the first Christians, and, because of their great love one for another, each sought to lighten the labours of the others. It was rather needful to prohibit than to exhort them to undertake the humblest and lowest offices in the convent. Everyone sought to be beforehand with the others in works of labour and servility. They washed the clothes, they helped in the kitchen and the refectory ; and, when any building was going on, they eagerly and humbly assisted the workmen. When they were tired with these labours, they refreshed themselves by some spiritual occupation, by study, reading, prayer or the duties of the choir. Their poverty was very great, but yet greater was the pleasure they took in it. Often when they returned home in the evening, there was hardly a mouthful of bread for them to eat ; and, when there was food, it was

very coarse and scanty. They often gave their clothes to the poor and cared nothing at all for cold and other accidents. To abstinence they added many other mortifications, and so kept the flesh in subjection to the spirit, that their souls were ever alert and watchful. They kept the observances of regular life and all the prescribed ceremonies with such exactness that superiors were often obliged in chapter to oppose themselves to their fervour in this matter, and to moderate something of the extreme rigour with which they adhered to everything that they knew or imagined to be the law, custom or tradition of their Order ; for indeed holy ceremonies hold no mean place among the things appertaining to religion, neither without them can there be the perfect love of God in the soul ; and it cannot be said of any of them that it is unimportant, for all are important, though doubtless some, compared with others, may seem less so. The first and principal is silence, without which religion is like a city without walls, or a house without a door. Our first Fathers had so well learnt this holy exercise from their saintly founder, that it was held among them as a kind of sacrilege to speak at the times and in the places forbidden by the Constitutions ; and even when any accident happened which might seem to justify a breach of silence, none were found willing to open their mouths. And what we may take as a sufficient testimony of their perfection is that God did not suffer the smallest transgressions to pass in them without severe chastisements." Castiglio goes on to relate the story of a lay-brother tormented by the devil for having drunk a little water without leave, and of others similarly and grievously punished for small transgressions of the Rule.

But lest it should be imagined that such fervour as

Castiglio describes as belonging to the thirteenth century is impossible in our own day, we will add Marchese's description of the Convent of Salamanca in the seventeenth century. "In that convent," he says, "the rigour of observance was kept up together with continual studies. The happy state of primitive religion seemed there never to have grown old. It was a perpetual alternation of choir and schools ; so that the religious were always employed either in God's praises or in attending to the salvation of their neighbour. With all these fatigues no indulgence was admitted in the rigours of fasting, which was observed during six months of the year with such exactness that the collation was nothing but a mouthful of bread. All rose for Matins without a single exception ; neither was there dispensation from rigorous enclosure, nor from silence, which last was indeed little felt, for the occupations were so continual that, even had any desired it, there was no time for talking." "Believe, dear reader," he adds, "what I have said ; for I speak as an eyewitness of the same, having been, though unworthy, for many years an inmate of the house."

We will conclude with his notice of Father Bartholomew Riera (A.D. 1532-1615), of whom he says : "He proposed to himself from the first a rigorous observance of the Rule as of the law given him by God, and thereby felt sure of reaching the perfection to which he was called. A religious who is punctual to his Rule is safe in any Order, but especially in that of St. Dominic, because of the perfection of the means therein afforded for the attainment of sanctity. And such was the exactness with which Bartholomew adhered to his rule that, during seventy years of religious life, he was never known to transgress in anything, however small, which was therein enjoined."

## CHAPTER VI

### OBEDIENCE

THE character of true obedience is taught us by the Venerable Father Humbert, our fifth General, who, in his letter to the Provinces, exhorts all the members of the Order to strive to obey “ promptly and devoutly, as to God and not to man, willingly and simply, without contradiction or discussion, with courage, cheerfulness and exactitude, obeying every command without exception, and with unremitting perseverance.” A very few anecdotes, selected almost at random out of the many to be found in the lives of our Saints, will suffice to show us how faithfully they practised this virtue, to the observance of which they had bound themselves by their vow of profession.

There are few prettier stories than that of the Blessed James of Ulm, one of our beatified lay-brothers (A.D. 1491), whom the world knows for his celebrity as a painter, but whose reputation in his Order and in his own time was that of a perfect model of religious obedience. He especially excelled in painting on glass ; and one day his glass was in the furnace, and he was sitting waiting for the critical moment when it should be time to remove it, as, should it remain too long exposed to the heat, his entire labour would be lost. When he was just about to open the furnace, an order came from the Prior that he was to go out to beg. The stained glass windows, on which so much patient toil had been expended, must be utterly ruined ; but Blessed James did not hesitate to obey. He

instantly set out on the quest, and did not return till late in the evening. His first steps on coming back were directed to his furnace ; and on opening it, instead of finding, as might have been expected, the shattered fragments of his work, he discovered his paintings in perfect preservation, the colours fixed with unusual brilliancy and success. This same holy religious received a similar command on another occasion, when he was discharging the duties of baker to his community. The order could hardly have been a more unreasonable one ; for, whilst he was begging his scraps in the streets, the whole week's provision must necessarily be spoilt. But again his obedience was miraculously rewarded. The bread, left so many hours in the oven, was found perfectly preserved and fit for use. Blessed James's perfection in this virtue was so well known that, on occasion of the visit of the Provincial to his convent at Bologna, his Prior determined to manifest it by a trial. " I will show your Reverence," he said, " a truly obedient religious." Then, calling Blessed James, " Brother James," he said, " you will take this letter to Paris and depart to-day." The lay-brother turned as if to leave the convent. " May I first fetch our stick ?" he said. It was the only preparation he proposed for a journey of many hundred miles.

A like spirit of prompt obedience was also displayed by Father Jerome of the Cross (A.D. 1566), whom his superior called out of the choir one evening as he was saying Compline. " Brother Jerome," he said, " you are to sail at once for Goa ; the vessel is even now in the port, ready to weigh anchor." "*Benedictus Deus*," replied Jerome, prostrating at the feet of the Prior to ask his blessing ; then, going to his cell for his mantle and breviary, he was about to embark, when his Superior bade him wait till the following

morning, as he was to be ordained priest before his departure. The night was spent in preparation for his ordination ; and, immediately after the ceremony, he set sail without bidding adieu to anyone.

Sister Mary Villani of Naples was remarkable for the obedience she rendered to her confessor, Father John Leonard ; and it may be said also that the obedience he exacted was equally remarkable. She once had the misfortune to break her leg ; and he commanded her to rise, go to the cell of another Sister, and there dance. The surprise of the Sisters may be imagined on seeing the sick person hurrying through the dormitory, as well as her broken leg would permit ; but when, on following her to the cell, they further beheld her gravely executing the prescribed dance, they, one and all, believed her delirious. When the dance was finished, however, it was discovered that she was perfectly cured.

Castiglio, on the other hand, tells us of the punishment inflicted on a disobedient religious, who, being sent by his superiors to a distant convent, went with great reluctance, grumbling all the way. "What have I done," he said, "to deserve this? I, a man of so much learning and eloquence, to be banished to this out-of-the-way corner ; it is too bad ; it is unreasonable ; I have every right to complain ; it is a downright piece of tyranny !" And so he went on ; but, before he came to his journey's end, the hand of the Lord had smitten him. His eyes and the whole of his head swelled, his tongue hung out of his mouth, and he fell senseless to the ground. He seemed to be at the point of death ; but his companions commending him to the prayers of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, then lately dead, he was permitted to recover, and pursued his journey in an altered tone of mind.



The same historian tells another story of a German Friar, Walter by name, who had the care of a convent of nuns, and was distributing the offices of the house. A certain Sister, Timegunda, was sick of fever ; nevertheless she earnestly begged Father Walter to give her an office likewise. " The office I give you," he replied, " is to keep your fever and to bear it patiently for the love of God." Timegunda went away quite satisfied ; and for weeks no remedy forced on her by her Sisters would avail to cure her ; she only laughed at their efforts, and asked how they could expect their medicine to absolve her from the office which had been given her under obedience. At length they were obliged to call Father Walter to their aid, who, coming to see the sick person, solemnly released her from her obedience, saying, " In the name of God I absolve you from the office which I imposed on you, and desire you to have the fever no longer." On this Sister Timegunda recovered, and went about as usual.

Of Sister Dominica Taruggi (A.D. 1517-1604) we read that, as she had been obedient in life, so was she also in her death ; for the Prioress, who was watching by her bed, hearing the signal for Matins and being unwilling to absent herself from the Office, determined to try the force of a command. Turning, therefore, to the dying woman, she said : " Sister Dominica, I am called to the choir ; wait till I return, and do not die till I am with you, in order that you may depart to your Spouse with your Superior's blessing." Dominica survived till the Office was ended and the Prioress had returned to her cell ; when, having received her blessing, she expired with a happy smile.

We are often told of the wonderful efficacy of obedience for the cure of scruples, but the instance given in the life of Father John Baptist of Naples is particularly amusing.

He was the Superior of a convent of nuns, one of whom was perpetually plaguing him with scruples. At length one day, being quite wearied out, he said, "I desire you to be silent, and to go to Communion, and not to say another word till I bid you." The nun departed, and, save the recitation of her Office, was unable to speak a word, and thus she continued till he took off the tie of obedience, which had fettered her tongue.

Leaving these extraordinary cases, we will quote the words of Magdalen Orsini, who particularly disliked to see religious desirous of changing their confessor or director for the sake of finding someone more to their liking. "Every confessor and every superior is an oracle of God," she would say, "not in himself, but as God's minister." And, in like manner, she would bid novices follow their Mistress as the angel given them by God. Euphrosyne of Torilla (A.D. 1466) was one day commanded to leave the choir, on account of weakness and indisposition, just as the *Te Deum* was being intoned. She felt a great reluctance to go; nevertheless she at once obeyed, and was consoled, as soon as she reached her cell, by hearing the *Sanctus* sung for her by angels.

At the hour of her death St. Catharine of Siena was able to say she had never once disobeyed her confessor or Superior; she never gave the smallest alms to the poor without previous permission asked from her confessor, and continued to eat as he had ordered, at a time when the least morsel of food brought on violent convulsions and threatened to cause her death.

Sister Laurentia Lorini (A.D. 1564) was long confined to the infirmary with sickness, and at first suffered much from the refusal of permission to communicate there as often as she desired. But, little by little, she was observed to lose

all concern about it, so that some of her Sisters even reproached her with indifference. "Sisters," she replied, "God has revealed to me through His angel that one act of obedience is better than a thousand communions made to please myself." Her angel, who had taught her this great truth, was indeed her constant friend and consoler. "God," she said, "has given me three consolations in this sickness: the Blessed Sacrament, my good angel, and holy obedience; and He has taught me to gain rich crowns by very little things." During the years she was unable to join the community in their exercises, she persuaded her Superior to make every act an obedience for her, prescribing what and how often she was to eat, on which side to lie, how long to sleep, and so on; and thus she lost nothing of the merit of a single action.

Mary of Jesus was through life an eminent example of obedience. When she resigned her office of Prioress and voluntarily began her novitiate over again, the more perfectly to humble herself and acquire the religious spirit, she was to be seen, although the Mother and foundress of the community, learning her lessons like the youngest novice. On her deathbed her confessor feared that the raptures of divine love into which she frequently broke would hasten the moment of dissolution and forbade her to speak thus. "You should rather express contrition for your sins," he said severely. She obeyed; but the struggle to silence love was a martyrdom. "Alas! my Jesus, may I then desire Thee no longer?" she whispered; "but Thy will be done!"

St. Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1224-1274) has left us a signal example of obedience, with which many of our readers will probably be familiar, but which is too beautiful to be omitted. A lay-brother who, being a stranger,

did not know him, one day accosted him in the cloister, telling him he was to be his companion in some business he had to transact in the city of Bologna, where the Saint was then residing. Thomas instantly obeyed without a word, though well aware that the lay-brother was under some mistake. The whole day he limped about after his companion, who was a fast walker, following him to all the shops and stalls, until recognised by some gentlemen of the city, who indignantly asked the lay-brother if he were aware who it was that was accompanying him. "No," was the reply, the Prior having probably told him to take as his companion the first Friar he happened to meet. On learning that the unknown religious was no other than the great Doctor so universally revered, the poor lay-brother was filled with confusion, and humbly asked the Saint's forgiveness. "Brother," answered St. Thomas, "the only one in fault has been myself, who have been unable to keep up with you all day." To those who asked why he had not explained the mistake, he gave this golden answer: "Obedience is the perfection of the religious life; by it man submits to man for the love of God, as God rendered Himself obedient unto men for their salvation."

Of St. Rose of Lima we read: "So great was her love of obedience that, when she felt exhausted after her prolonged fasts, she would never take anything without first asking her mother's leave. God permitted that the latter should sometimes leave her request unanswered; in this case Rose never repeated it, but interpreted her mother's silence as an indication that God willed her to continue fasting; and thus she sometimes remained several consecutive days without tasting food. She would also apply to her mother for leave to take the silks and other materials she wanted for her work. Doña Flores was naturally of an

irritable disposition, and one day said to her daughter : ‘ Why are you so tiresome, Rose ? All that you want is in an open cupboard ; why can’t you go and take it ? ’ To this the Saint humbly replied : ‘ My work is of very little value in itself ; so I try to enhance its worth by giving it the merit of obedience.’ To test her docility, her mother one day made her embroider her flowers on the wrong side, and then unpick the work ; and her orders were obeyed with perfect sweetness.”

The entire submission of judgment shown by Maria Raggi went so far that, when a priest tried to persuade her she was possessed and offered to exorcise her, she neither doubted his word, nor, on the other hand, did she venture to be exorcised without permission of her confessor. “ Since your Reverence says so, I am doubtless possessed,” she replied, “ but I cannot be exorcised without leave. I will, therefore, go and seek it from my confessor.” This was at a time when the only symptoms of possession were the gifts of miracles and prayers which made her an object of veneration to all Rome.

Blessed Jordan, though Master-General of the Order, submitted in all points of private direction to the Superior of the convent where he happened to be, and especially in times of sickness. Jerome Baptist Lanuza (A.D. 1553-1624), in like manner, when made Provincial, implored the General to appoint him a Superior of his own ; “ for it appeared impossible to him,” says Marchese, “ to live out of obedience.” This was accordingly done, and Father John Vincent of Catalonia was appointed his master, to whom he ever testified the most perfect submission.

If obedience was so dear to the Order in general, still more have its novitiates been always regarded as schools of this virtue ; and the present chapter may perhaps be

the most fitting place to introduce a few of the traditions which cluster so thickly around these nurseries of sanctity. The life of our holy Father, St. Dominic, and of his successor, Blessed Jordan, are full of beautiful stories about our novices ; but, as these are probably familiar to many of our readers, we prefer to take our illustrations from less well-known sources. We cannot refrain, however, from quoting one passage from the life of Blessed Jordan.

This most loveable of religious Superiors is said to have clothed more than a thousand novices with his own hands. Whenever he was expected at any convent, it was necessary to get in a supply of cloth to provide habits for the postulants who were sure to present themselves ; and very touching are the accounts left us of his intercourse with these young souls whom he had begotten unto Christ. From one of these stories it appears that novices in the thirteenth century were as open to the temptation to unseasonable laughter as their successors in a more degenerate age. Blessed Jordan was once saying Compline in an inn with a troop of young novices whom he was taking to different convents, when something tickled the fancy of one of them and he began to laugh. This laughter was of course contagious ; and an elder Father who was of the company took upon himself to reprove by signs this untimely mirth. But the novices only laughing the more, the holy General took their part, and said to their corrector : " Brother, who has made you Master of Novices, and what business have you to find fault with them ? " Then, stopping the Office, he ordered the table to be laid for supper, and addressed the delinquents as follows : " Laugh, my dearest children, laugh heartily. I give you leave to do so ; for you indeed have reason to laugh and be merry, because you have been set free from

the devil's prison and are loosed from the bonds wherein he so long held you captive." We are told that the novices, on hearing these words, were greatly consoled in spirit and were never again tempted to unrestrained laughter.

Though we have not, like the Society of Jesus, the happiness of counting canonized Saints among our novices, we have at least the history of some who seem in the short year of their probation to have attained to the perfection of Saints. Of these we may notice Brother Thomas Maria of Cupertino (A.D. 1574-1593), whose master, in order to try him, once bade him eat some mud, and who immediately and without hesitation took it into his mouth and swallowed it; and Anthony Creus (A.D. 1618), whose obedience was approved by miracles. When he was one day in the sacristy, the Novice-Master entered and roughly bade him go to the kitchen to fetch some lighted charcoal for the thurible. "What shall I put it in?" asked Anthony. "What a foolish question!" returned the Master; "in your scapular, to be sure." Anthony made no reply, but, going as he was desired, brought the burning charcoal in his scapular, which, to the astonishment of all, was found uninjured.

Magdalen Orsini, when a novice, was subjected to a very hard probation by order of her confessor. Before entering religion, she had been married and had had a noble fortune at her command; and perhaps he deemed some extra severity necessary in order to reduce her to the childlike simplicity required in her new state. If so, he met with no difficulty on her part. Day after day was the Novice-Mistress instructed to give her fresh trials. Contradicted whenever she spoke, opposed in her least wish, blamed when she did nothing, and severely penanced on ridiculous accusations, the sweetness of her temper and the

promptness of her obedience never failed. Her companions were ordered at one time to cut off the threads of her embroidery at night ; but she never seemed troubled in the morning, when she found her day's work ruined ; she only wondered why the cat, whom she supposed the author of her misfortunes, always selected her frame for his mischief. Few lives are more instructive and beautiful than that of this excellent religious, who, whether as subject or Superior, seems to present us with a perfect example of every conventual virtue.

Sister Catharine of St. Peter received the habit in ecstasy. She had been called to the Order by St. Catharine herself ; but the malice of the devil had raised so many obstacles to her clothing that it had been long deferred. When finally the time came for her to answer the question, " What is your request ?" the joy of at length being able to say, " God's mercy and yours and the holy habit," was more than she could bear. It was an ecstasy of excessive happiness.

As soon as Blessed James of Salomonio was clothed, he asked for the Rule and Constitutions of the Order and made them his exclusive study during the time of his novitiate. So well did he profit by this study that he was deemed a Saint even before his profession, yet a Saint whom anyone may imitate ; for all his holiness consisted in and sprang out of exactness to his rule. It is thought he never transgressed it during his whole life ; and he used to say that the Constitutions and the Life of St. Dominic are reading enough to make a good religious.

We have accounts of some novices, imperfect in the early period of their religious life, like Ippolita of Jesus, who yet on the very day of her profession was touched with so lively a grace that she reached great sanctity. One of Blessed



Emilia Bicchieri's novices was changed in a yet more remarkable manner. Emilia (A.D. 1238-1278) had received her in consequence of an assurance from heaven that in spite of her levity and worldliness she would not continue in these dispositions beyond the eleventh day after her clothing. Nevertheless her foolish conduct greatly scandalised all the community, till Emilia, calling her into her oratory, laid her hands on her head, saying, "My God, give wisdom to this foolish child," and from that hour an extraordinary change was remarked in the novice. It was as though a new soul had been given her. Other instances of a similar kind are to be found in our Chronicles.

John Baptist Cataneo (A.D. 1504) was accustomed to say that during his noviceship he desired only two things, the grace of perseverance and the power of thanking God aright for his religious vocation. He was but seventeen, and died before profession, owing to the absence of the Prior who should have received his vows. Finding himself in extremity, he begged a brother novice to help him once more to put on his religious habit, and, rising, prostrated before the crucifix and made an entire consecration of himself to his Divine Master. Then, still kneeling, he caused the Passion to be read aloud to him by his companion and expired at the last words.

Lewis of Aquin was equally admirable as novice and Novice-Master. In the latter capacity he spent most of his religious life and trained many holy souls to perfection. He mingled the rigour of his discipline with great kindness, and used on certain days to take all his novices out for recreation ; but before leaving the convent he always sang a Mass for the Dead, perhaps for the purpose of sobering the merriment of these little festivities with the thought of the suffering souls. His chief care seemed to be to prepare

his novices for Communion. "Children," he would say, "I am nothing but vile dust and ashes ; yet there is not one of you but rises in my presence ; and, if conscious of a fault, you blush to appear before me : will you enter the presence of the God of Angels with less respect ?"

St. Lewis Bertrand is regarded in the Order as the special patron of our novitiates ; and Blessed Laurence of Ripafratta (A.D. 1359-1457) was another renowned Novice-Master. So also was Father Matthew of Covessa, one of the most celebrated missionaries of the Philippine Islands. He was once granted a vision in which he saw a bridge of enormous span thrown over a fiery gulf ; and some of those who were crossing the bridge voluntarily cast themselves into the abyss and perished in the flames. These he understood to represent novices who wilfully abandon their vocation ; and, perceiving that some among them were his own children, he set himself to prayer and obtained for some of them the gift of perseverance.

In the life of Sister Mary Magdalen Caraffa (A.D. 1468-1552) we find an example of one of those stormy noviceships wherein the soul seems given up to every sort of temptation. Never had she a moment's peace ; day and night she was tormented by fears, scruples, and horrible visions. Yet on the day of her profession all these sufferings ceased ; the chains which bound her captive to Christ set her free from the slavery of Satan, and from that hour she enjoyed an uninterrupted serenity.

Brother Paul of St. Mary (A.D. 1534-1597) is an example of another kind of novice ; and his story is not without its lesson for ourselves. He was thirty years of age before he received the habit as a lay-brother. During his noviceship he gave signs of an excellent disposition but of the most unconquerable stupidity. He was simple, humble and

obedient, but so inexpressibly dull as to be of no use in any office in which he was tried. The superiors, to whom it did not seem convenient to admit a stupid novice, referred the case to the chapter ; and it was unanimously decided that Brother Paul must go, being too stupid for profession. Paul, however, had sufficient wit to know that God was not going to be deprived of his services for lack of a sharp intellect, and betook himself to his prayers. When the time came for dismissing him, a series of obstacles presented themselves. The key of the cell where his secular dress was supposed to be, could not be found ; and, when at last the door was opened, the dress was not there ; then, just as the clothes were found, the noviceship bell rang, and the porter, going to see what it was, heard someone say : “ The Father Prior desires that Brother Paul be not sent away ; he is to keep the habit.” When the message was brought to the Novice-Master, he was delighted ; for, in spite of his dullness, Paul was a great favourite with him. The next day, however, to his surprise, the Prior asked if Paul were gone. “ Your Paternity surely forbade him to be sent away,” he replied. “ I did nothing of the kind,” answered the Prior, “ I imagined he had gone away yesterday.” When the case was enquired into, there appeared to be so many clear indications of the will of God in favour of poor Paul that the community yielded the point, and to his great joy he was received to profession. They never had cause to regret their determination ; for Paul lived and died a saint, and wrought the salvation of many souls, both in his convent and in the world.

We have another instance of an apparently stupid novice in St. Catharine de Ricci, of whom we read : “ Our Lord, Who intended to raise His chosen spouse to the sublimest heights of holiness, took care to lay within her a deep

foundation of humility. Her continual interior conversation with the Divine Lover of her soul kept her in a state of almost constant abstraction ; so that, with the best will in the world, she was always failing in the outward observances of the Rule. She showed no aptitude for the chant or for manual labour ; at recreation she seemed half asleep ; and she could with difficulty take part even in spiritual conversation. She, indeed, bore with unalterable sweetness the public and private reproofs which her apparent stupidity brought upon her ; still there was no improvement. In her simplicity the holy maiden had never revealed, even to her confessor, the supernatural favours which had been lavished upon her from infancy. The good nuns were, therefore, far from guessing the real state of the case ; and, as the months of her probation went by, they became more and more convinced that the stupid and incapable novice must be sent away. When Sister Catharine discovered their intentions, she besieged heaven with prayers and penances to avert the threatened blow, and threw herself at the feet of each of the religious, imploring them to allow her to remain. Disarmed by her humility, they admitted her to profession," and in due time she became the mainstay and glory of their convent.

One instance occurs in our chronicles in which the motive which determined the novice to make choice of the Dominican Order was precisely the perfection of its obedience. The story is a very beautiful one, and deserves to be told at length. Michael Zamora (A.D. 1564) went early in life to Mexico, where he made a large fortune in trade, and in a few years' time returned to Spain, to enjoy his riches among his own kindred. As he drew near Seville, where his family resided, the thought came into his head to make trial of the affection of his relatives by con-

cealing his wealth ; and so, when his family came out to meet him, he assumed the air of a poor man, and answered all the questions they put to him as to his success and the result of his trading ventures in the tone of a disappointed speculator. His father received him, however, with undiminished affection ; but his friends, who had counted on having his riches at their command, and even his brothers, treated him with coldness and neglect. For four days he kept them in ignorance of the truth ; on the fifth, secretly leaving the house, he laid aside his poor attire and returned in a rich velvet doublet, with gold chain and all the other finery commonly worn by the gay cavaliers of the time. Directly the news of his riches spread through the town, the cold impertinence of his friends was exchanged for the most respectful courtesy ; the house was thronged with visitors ; and each vied with the other in expressions of adulation and regard. But Zamora had learnt the lesson he desired. " How ! " he said, " am I not still Zamora, the poor fool who knew not how to make a penny for himself amid the gold of the Indies ? I am not changed, because my doublet was fustian yesterday and is velvet to-day. You love, not me, but my riches ; and only in my father have I found the thing I sought, a constant and faithful heart." Then, dividing his money between his father and the poor, he determined to leave Spain for ever, and to return to Mexico. In accordance with his father's earnest wish he married before he returned to America, but his tie with the world was broken ; his wife soon died ; and abandoning every chance of advancement, he retired into the mountains with one companion whom he had persuaded to accompany him. They continued to live as hermits for some years, until one day Zamora addressed his friend in the following terms : " Brother, it seems to me we do but

deceive ourselves in thinking we have as yet renounced all things and given them to God ; yea, rather, we have hitherto given Him nothing ; for, though indeed this sheepskin is all we call our own, there is something we have not renounced, which is more precious than all besides, and that is ourselves. We are living without obedience ; and without obedience poverty is imperfect, for we are still masters of ourselves. Let us, therefore, seek the spiritual bondage of a religious Order in which our sacrifice may be complete ; and for myself the choice is already made, for I am resolved to enter the one in which obedience is most perfectly observed, and that is the Order of Preachers." His companion agreed to his design, but chose for himself the Order of St. Francis, attracted by its austere poverty. Zamora's after life was what might have been expected from one who had so thoroughly penetrated into the spirit of the state he had embraced as to perceive that one counsel of perfection could not be carried out without the other, and that obedience, the one vow of his Order, included in reality all besides. Faithful to his choice of poverty and of the lowest place, he took the habit of a lay-brother in the Convent of Ozaca, and in that capacity he not only served the community with the utmost fidelity, but was also of material use to the citizens by his talents as an architect and mechanic.

We will end this chapter with a quotation from St. Catharine's treatise on Obedience, which forms the concluding part of her *Dialogue*. After explaining that obedience is the key of heaven, she continues : " Everything that the obedient man does is meritorious. If he eats, he eats by obedience ; if he sleeps, he sleeps by obedience ; whether he goes, or comes, or fasts, or watches, he does all by obedience. If he serves his neigh-

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bour, it is by obedience. If he is in the choir, the refectory or his cell, what is it that guides him or keeps him there ? Obedience, which, by the holy light of faith, casts him, dead to his own will and full of contempt for himself, into the arms of those who command him. Placed in the bark of obedience, he lets himself be guided by his Superior and happily traverses the stormy sea of this life in peace of soul and tranquillity of heart, obedience and faith dispelling all darkness. He is strong, because he has no longer any weakness or fear ; for he has destroyed self-love, whence weakness and inordinate fears spring.

## CHAPTER VII

### POVERTY AND HUMILITY

**I**T need scarcely be said that in a mendicant order the poverty enjoined by the Rule is most exact and perfect. As an example of the kind of poverty practised by the Order in its purest development, we will give an account of the Convent of Talavera, founded by Father John Hurtado early in the sixteenth century. The Friars were at the time suffering great persecution from a certain nobleman, who used all his influence to prevent their getting any support or assistance. Their possessions consisted solely of a garden, in which was a little hut, scarcely enough to shelter them from the rain. In fact, it had originally been the garden tool-house of the former owner of the ground, and was about thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide. It was not divided into rooms ; the walls were of mud and straw, and the floor was the bare earth. As soon as it had been put a little into repair the Fathers took possession, without waiting for the walls to dry. The life they led there exceeded in austerity that of the hermits of the Thebaid ; they slept on the ground, and their food consisted of such vegetables as their garden produced, dressed in water. Their only luxury was the fruit ; and this they did not often enjoy, as the nobleman before mentioned, amongst other annoyances, used to hire men to steal it by night. Their drink was water, for it was with difficulty they could procure even the wine necessary for celebrating Mass, which they said every morning in a neighbouring church. They preached daily in Talavera and all the



country round ; after dinner they gave themselves up to prayer and study, and watched a great part of the night. As soon as the sun was down, they might be seen drawing water for their garden, on whose productiveness they depended for support. And yet, amid all their labours and the wretchedness of their accommodation, the hours of Office and meditation went on with as much regularity as in the best-appointed monastery. They did not say Office in their hut ; the space covered by the large overshadowing branches of the trees served them for choir, refectory and study ; and thus, in the very midst of a large and luxurious city, they led as penitential a life as the Fathers of the desert. Yet they were perfectly happy, free from worldly cares ; and, the more the world persecuted them, so much the more did they rejoice in following the very footsteps of Jesus in His poverty and humiliations. Spain and Portugal were at that time torn with civil wars ; and every one laughed at the absurdity of their design and at their simplicity in thinking of founding a new monastery at a time when the whole kingdom was rent by dissensions. But Father John trusted in God and not in man, and knew very well that civil dissensions are no obstacle to the accomplishment of the Divine Will. To the taunts of his neighbours he only replied : “ It is true we have not a coin amongst us ; nevertheless, by and by, more than twenty thousand ducats will be spent on the church and convent of Talavera.” This state of things continued for several years ; at length a man of the city took the habit ; but, being unable to bear the excessive austerity of the Rule, he left the community, spreading everywhere, however, the report of their extraordinary sanctity and poverty. “ When I asked for the habit,” he said, “ I thought still to live as a man, but I found these Friars living rather as angels than

as men. From morning till night they are at work, either in the pulpit, the confessional or the garden. They seem neither to eat, sleep nor speak. All their life is abstinence, disciplines, labour and prayers, or work for the souls of others." His word made such an impression on the people that they became liberal in their alms ; and so at length the Friars were able to purchase a few cottages which lay between their garden and the church, and, little by little, to build themselves a humble convent, which afterwards became one of the most renowned in Spain.

This was much after the pattern of foundations in St. Dominic's own day. Suero Gomez (A.D. 1233) established the first convent in Portugal and built it of turf. The Convent of St. Nicholas of Bologna was so narrow and confined that the cells could hardly contain their inmates ; and, when Rodolph of Faenza, the procurator, made some additions in the absence of St. Dominic, the holy Founder on his return wept at beholding them, and exclaimed : " What ! will they build palaces whilst I am still alive ?" We know that the poverty observed by the Order at that time was so strict that, when St. Francis left the convent of his own Friars in Bologna in indignation at what he deemed their infringement of their Rule in this matter, he took up his abode with the Friar-Preachers.

Father Samuel of Casacalenda (A.D. 1652) was eminent for his practice of poverty ; his cell had little in it but his mattress ; and we are told that, one year, having according to the custom of our Order to make a list of the things given to his use, he put down his bed, his clothes and the four walls of his cell ; and, when asked why he had mentioned these last, he said : " They are as much mine as anything else I have." Never would he accept of anything new, if he could help it ; and once when the Prior

had ordered him to receive a new habit, he answered it was scarcely worth while, for he was soon going away. "And where are you going?" asked the astonished Prior. "To the other world, sooner or later," said Samuel; and in fact, only a few days after he was taken with his last sickness.

Ippolita of Jesus (A.D. 1553-1624), in her reformed Convent of Barcelona, would not allow even of the ordinary appropriation to the use of the Sisters of articles of dress or other necessities. Everything was in common and each one was served out of the general stock. Nothing was allowed to be kept in any cell save what was of strict necessity. She once begged her confessor to procure her a picture of St. Raymund Pennafort, to whom she had great devotion. He brought her a very pretty little marble statue of the Saint; but she sent it back as against poverty, and begged to have only a little common print, fit for the walls of a religious cell.

Lewis of Aquin was another to whom poverty was very dear. His cell contained nothing but a few books, the instruments of mechanical work, which he used in recreation time, for he was always at work with his hands in one way or another, and his miserable bed. Once, as he walked abroad with one of his novices, the youth observed a quantity of money on the ground and pointed it out to his master. "Leave it alone," said Father Lewis; "you may stop and look at a cross made by two straws; but money is only fit for a religious man to tread on." His dress was patched and mended in all directions, but always scrupulously clean; for he was wont to say with St. Bernard, "Poverty is always beautiful, but dirt never."

Of poverty in dress we have indeed several examples, e.g., that of Father Jerome Verglego, whose miserable

appearance sometimes equalled that of a street beggar. Once his Prior, moved by charity, made him receive an entirely new outfit, greatly to his own discomfort and distress. It was the custom to give all the old patched habits to the novices ; and Jerome, who knew this, watched his opportunity, and, finding the mantle of one of the novices in the sacristy, laid hands on it, leaving his own new one in its place. The novice sought his ragged mantle for three days in vain, but at length found it on Jerome's back, who was wearing it with wonderful satisfaction. On being accused of the theft, " My dear Brother," he replied, " I have left you a much better one in its stead ; so go your way and take your mantle ; only leave me in peace."

Delitia of Palermo (A.D. 1561-1642), who brought about the reformation of her convent because she would not be professed in a house where community life was not observed, was accustomed to say that no religious can consider herself really living according to her state unless she feels some of the inconveniences of poverty. When Paolino of St. Bernard (A.D. 1517-1585) came to Rome to attend the General Chapter of the Order, all the Fathers of the Minerva came out to welcome him, for he was the most learned master of his day, esteemed alike by Popes and emperors, and reckoned the most illustrious member of his Institute then living. They were met by a poor Friar, clad in a short, ragged habit, driving a miserable ass. Concluding that this was his companion, they enquired when Father Paolino might be expected. " Paolino is here," was the reply ; and their astonishment and confusion may be imagined. Another time, at Bologna, he attended the General Chapter, and took an active and distinguished part in the business under discussion. In the evening he retired to the church to pray ; but the sacristan, seeing in the

dusk what seemed to him like a very suspicious-looking character lurking in a corner, seized him by the throat, and, beating him severely, called aloud for help to secure the thief. "When you have finished beating me," quietly returned Paolino, "I will thank you to let me finish my prayers ; for I am no thief, but only poor Brother Paolino." He always chose the poorest and most out-of-the-way churches for his Lenten sermons, and refused to go to the places where he knew he would be followed by a rich and fashionable audience.

On one occasion he chose for the scene of his labours a village so miserably poor that even the church was built of mud ; and every day, after preaching, he led his congregation to a spot where they provided themselves with stones, which they carried back, and with which they erected a more secure though still rude kind of building. The Lent thus passed in preaching and hard work among the peasants was the happiest of Paolino's life.

Jerome Baptist Lanuza, of whom we have already spoken, was as remarkable for his poverty as for his other virtues ; nevertheless, in anything relating to the divine service he would allow of no stinginess or meanness of any kind. Whilst his episcopal residence was bare and comfortless, the cathedral was rich and sumptuous. Once when he had bought a very beautiful Pontifical, which had belonged to the Archbishop of Saragossa, his brother expressed astonishment and displeasure that a poor Bishop should not be content with less expensive books. "Let my brother command me to use old rags for curtains in my own house," replied Jerome, "and he shall be obeyed ; but with regard to the church and its furniture I will not be restricted ; and the vestments shall be the most precious I can procure ; for, to my mind, rich and handsome church

furniture betokens a good Bishop ; whilst, on the other hand, a bare and miserable church is an indication of a miserable Bishop." His personal expenditure, we are told, did not exceed fifteen crowns in nine years. He always wore his religious habit, often torn and patched ; he never suffered any one to mend it for him, but always carried a needle-case and thread in his pocket that he might perform this office for himself. Once, being found by his confessor seated on his bed mending his scapular, he said, " Father, would not the devil laugh well at me ?" Another time one of his pages entered, and, finding him occupied with his work, wished to retire ; but Lanuza called him back. " Come in," he said, " I am only doing as all poor men are accustomed to do." Yet with all his poverty, we are told, he was always neat and clean in his person. St. Thomas and Blessed Albert the Great, the two luminaries of the Order, rivalled one another in their love of poverty. St. Thomas wrote all his great works on scraps of paper, and was as poor in clothing and other personal matters as the simplest novice. When speaking once of the perfection of this virtue, he said, " Poverty in an imperfect religious is great expense with little gain ;" for it was poverty of spirit he aimed at, and not the mere literal observance of a rule. Blessed Albert also wrote all his works on backs of letters and other scraps of paper ; and in whatever convent he happened to be when he wrote any of his MSS., there he left them, esteeming it a kind of appropriation to take them away with him as though they had been his own.

Antoinette of Brescia (A.D. 1470-1570) looked round her cell once each week to see if any superfluity had crept in ; and, if so, it was at once discarded. Sister Bernardine of Palafox, a Spanish Dominicaness, who died early in the seventeenth century, is said to have worn her profession-

habit till the day of her death. An angel appeared to Magdalen of the Ascension (A.D. 1589) and showed her a beautiful and richly furnished apartment, saying to her, "Such is the dwelling-place thou hast purchased for thyself in heaven by thy poverty."

Magdalen Orsini would not even keep pen and ink in her cell, saying, in the words before quoted, "A religious, to be really poor, must be content to suffer inconveniences." The cell of Mary of Jesus contained a few boards on which she slept, and a bare wooden shelf, which supported her paper crucifix. Anything like ornament or the little objects of curiosity common in the world was held by her in abhorrence; and this spirit became so general in her convent that it was difficult to get the Sisters to make use of anything new; and as to partiality or affection for earthly things, the word was ever in their mouths: "God alone is worth loving." Their friends often brought them presents of little pictures and other objects of devotion; but, like their Mother, they always refused to have them. On resigning the office of Prioress this admirable religious brought her new Superior a reliquary and an Agnus Dei; they were the only superfluities collected during all the years of her government. She would not even let her subjects wear more than one pin in their veils, and mortified nothing so promptly as the least appearance of affectation or attachment to dress. Finally, her definition of religious poverty is worth noting: "A perfect detachment from any thing for ourselves and a great care of whatever is for the community."

If on the one hand we have to own with sorrow that community life has been often abandoned in certain convents of the Order, yet even this has been the means of exhibiting some instances of heroic virtue in those who

perfectly fulfilled the obligations of their state in the midst of the general relaxation ; witness Delitia of Palermo, whose firmness reformed her convent while she was yet a novice ; and Domicilla of Bologna (A.D. 1536), who was placed by her parents in the Convent of St. Agnes at Bologna at a time when that community had completely fallen into decay. Every kind of worldliness had crept into the cloister, and the name of religion alone remained. For a time she did as others did ; her time was chiefly spent in the cultivation of her musical talents ; she dressed with great taste, we are told, and had everything she desired. By and by, one of her aunts who had lately died and who was buried in the cemetery of her convent, appeared to her with so terrible an aspect that Domicilla's heart was changed. Gathering all her property together, she went to the Prioress and flung it at her feet, declaring her resolution from that day forth to live according to the Rule and Constitutions of her Order. The community could not prevent this ; they could but laugh at her and annoy her in a thousand ways ; but Domicilla remained firm. No more tasteful dresses and musical *soirées* ; prayer, and a coarse habit, and a cell stripped of every ornament and comfort were now all she sought after. She was nearly overcome by the continual persecutions of her Sisters, to whom her conversion was a perpetual reproach ; but at length some of them followed her example, and led a life of strict retirement and great austerity in the midst of this miserable scene of sacrilegious indulgence. Domicilla was visited by Saints and comforted by our Lord Himself. In particular, we are told, St. Thomas Aquinas used often to appear to her and encourage her to persevere. When she died, the angels filled her cell and sang around her body ; and one voice



was heard, sweeter and more powerful than the rest, which the Sisters thought must be that of her angel guardian. Her example was the means of recalling very many of the community from their laxity, but we do not read of the general reform of the convent taking place, as in the cases of Ippolita and Delitia.

Closely connected with the virtue of religious poverty is that of humility, particularly as shown in the discharge of such offices and occupations as in the world are commonly thought to be degrading. This poverty of spirit deserves to be illustrated by a few examples ; and we must remember in the case of those of our Sisters who are mentioned with praise by their biographers for doing what we should consider ordinary duties, that in the communities to which they belonged, the greater part of the menial work was commonly discharged by lay-sisters ; and, therefore, when we find them taking these offices on themselves, it was a voluntary act and done doubtless in the spirit of humiliation. Thus we read of Blessed Emilia Bicchieri, Prioress and foundress of St. Margaret's Convent at Vercelli, that she used to scrub the floors and wash the dishes with the lay-sisters. Magdalen Orsini, foundress and Prioress of the Convent of St. Mary Magdalen at Rome, always wished to resign her office and become a lay-sister. She was indeed permitted to resign her office, though obliged to continue a choir-sister. She consoled herself for the partial disappointment by taking upon herself the meanest offices ; and at length, to try her, the new Prioress ordered her to undertake the care of the fowls, in obedience, however, to a lay-sister, to whom she was only to be "aid." She applied herself to this charge with as much diligence as if it had been the government of a province, often recalling to mind what her first confessor

had been accustomed to say to her, "I trust in time, Sister Magdalen, you will be able to look after four chickens." This same confessor, for some trifling fault in the management of her poultry, gave her a severe and humiliating penance ; but Magdalen only rejoiced ; she had found exactly what she wanted.

Catharine of St. Peter (A.D. 1648) was called "the slave of the community" on account of her unwearying devotedness to the service of all. Her humility was extraordinary. Once the Countess of Monte Rei, attracted by the fame of her sanctity, obtained permission from the Pope to enter the enclosure and have an interview with her ; but, on the news of her approach, Catharine determined on concealment. The plan she hit on was ingenious ; she crept under one of the seats in the choir, and made a Sister sit down so as entirely to hide her from view ; and there she remained during the whole visit ; so that the Countess was obliged to go away disappointed.

It is remarkable that those of our Sisters who were most distinguished for the practice of acts of abasement were of noble and even of royal birth ; witness, Blanche, the Infanta of Spain, daughter of King Ferdinand III., who, when remonstrated with for persisting in scrubbing the cloisters, answered : "These things are more necessary for me than for you, Sisters ; because God has done more for me in order to detach me from the vanities of the world than he has done for you, and He expects more from me in return." The Princesses Jane of Portugal (A.D. 1456-1490) and Margaret of Hungary discharged the offices of the lowliest of lay-sisters ; and of the latter in particular it is said that, when not in the choir, she was to be found in the kitchen, washhouse or infirmary, where she performed the most heroic acts of charity and

self-abasement. Blessed Lucy of Narni (A.D. 1476-1544) before her entrance into religion was often seen to be sweeping the stairs, and washing and cooking with her women around her. "Why do you do these things yourself?" said one of her friends one day; "you have surely plenty of servants." "I do them to mortify a proud woman who conceals herself under my silk dresses and calls herself the Countess," she replied.

Mary of Jesus, when Prioress, always cleaned the shoes of the other Sisters. Father Charles of Bruges (A.D. 1668), although Prior of his convent, never failed to wash the clothes of the community with the lay-brothers, and this even in the depth of winter.

Of Lewis of Aquin we read that he daily took his novices to sweep and clean some part of the convent; and that, when Prior of the royal Convent of St. Dominic at Naples, he served in the infirmary like a lay-brother, carrying the mattresses, etc., on his shoulders, and that he loved nothing better than to be the servant of all. Although he had been Prior of the first convents of his Order and was looked upon as one of its most distinguished members, he would sit, if allowed, at the novices' table, or even at that of the lay-brothers, eating the scraps which they left, and never asking for bread or anything else that might be served at the meal. His simplicity equalled his humility; and he would often say that, of all the stories told of his great relative, St. Thomas of Aquin, none pleased him more than his manner of bearing a joke played on him by a teasing Brother who liked to try his patience, and who once asked him to come and look at a flying ass that was outside. The Saint immediately laid down his pen and went, as desired; and, when every one laughed at him and asked how he could believe such folly,

he answered that he thought it was much more likely that an ass should have wings than that a religious should say what was not true.

No less than four of our lay-brothers have been raised to the altars of the Church ; and, as we read their Lives, which are of singular beauty, we cannot fail to be struck by the fact that their heroic virtue mainly consisted in the devout and holy manner in which they discharged the lowly duties of their state. Another lay-brother, John Ordognes of Cordova (A.D. 1583), had a wonderful devotion to St. Catharine of Siena and adopted her plan of making a devout ejaculation on every step as he mounted the stairs. His office of porter kept him on his legs all day long, so he got through a vast number of aspirations as he went on his messages. He had obtained leave to give away in alms all the scraps of the refectory and also to beg for poor students, a large number of whom he daily provided with a meal. So successful were his pleadings on their behalf that an endowment was established to perpetuate this charity after his death ; and thirty-two students dined daily at the convent in a room set apart for the purpose, one of the religious reading a spiritual book to them during their meal.

Blessed Catharine of Raconigi gives us an example of another kind of humility equally admirable. The devil once assailed her with subtle and difficult questions regarding the Blessed Trinity and defied her to answer him. " I thought you knew I was too ignorant and stupid to understand such mysteries," she replied ; and by this humility she defeated his attack.

But we should never come to an end if we were to quote all the beautiful lessons in this fundamental virtue taught us in the lives of our Saints. We will content ourselves,

then, with mentioning the wonderful fact, alluded to in one of the antiphons of the office of St. Thomas Aquinas as nothing short of miraculous, *viz.*, that this illustrious Doctor of the Church had so thoroughly grasped the truth that of himself he was nothing, and that all his marvellous endowments of mind and heart were the free gift of God, as never during his whole life to have been once assailed by the pestilential sting of pride. “*Pestiferæ superbiæ nunquam persensit stimulum.*”

## CHAPTER VIII

### PENANCE AND SILENCE

WERE we to close this part of our work without some allusion to the character of austerity borne by the Order, we should be leaving out one of its most striking features. The origin of the name which the Third Order has received in exchange for that which it first bore, is not known ; but, whatever it may have been, one thing is very certain, *viz.*, that the name of Penance as fitly describes one character of this branch of the Order as that of the Militia of Jesus Christ does another. In fact, some of our Saints, such as St. Rose of Lima, may probably be taken as examples of the most extreme kind of austerity recognized in the Church. At the same time it is difficult to put this part of their sanctity into a shape which will not be wearisome and painful ; for not only may the simple enumeration of fasts, hair-shirts or disciplines be read without producing much edification, but we are wont to console ourselves with the thought that the extraordinary penances of the Saints are intended for our admiration rather than our imitation. Nevertheless this seems no reason why the ordinary penitential practices and the habitual spirit of penance proper to the Order should be forgotten. Some Institutes exist which avowedly make it their spirit to cultivate interior mortification almost exclusively. Whether this is more or less perfect is not here the question ; we only know it is not the spirit of the Dominican Order, and, we might add, least of all is it the spirit of the Order of Penance. True, St. Catharine speaks in

severe, almost sarcastic terms of those who practise exterior mortification without the interior subjugation of the will ; she calls them " the devil's martyrs," and perpetually inculcates great freedom and common sense in all matters of austerity, and the infinite superiority of one conquest of self-will over all the penances that were ever performed. But if she valued interior so much more highly than exterior mortification, the best proof we can have of the perfection of her interior mortification is the extent to which she practised that which was less ; for surely there was never austerity more severe or more continual than her own. Nor can we find one single instance in which our Saints departed from this spirit of their Order. All were not equally active in exterior works, and all were not subject to the religious vows ; all were not theologians, or preachers, or teachers of the poor,—but one and all were mortified ; and not their wills alone, but their bodies also were chastised and subdued by the practice of heroic austerity. Still, to press the example of St. Rose with her bed of broken potsherds and her silver crown, Blessed Henry Suso on his sharp cross of agony, St. Catharine and her miraculous fasting, and many others, would be simply useless. They excite no compunction for our own want of penance, because we escape under the very shelter of their extraordinary character. But if we take the list of austerities as they are parcelled out and divided into heads by Père de Réchac, and read, " Of Austerities in general," " Of Austerities in Girdles, Hair-Shirts, and Chains," " Of Austerities in Disciplines," " Of Fasts," " Of Watching," and so on, and then remember that, out of the thousand examples given, very few comparatively are of beatified Saints, but that it is the Sisters of various convents all over the world whose practices are here recorded, we get,

not an idea of extraordinary penances practised by a few, but rather an extraordinary idea of the amount of penance practised by all. Still, as we said before, it is very difficult to speak of such things so as to avoid, we might almost say, disgust. Yet, if we only take the subject by itself, and study it, comparing these details, which some find so painful and revolting, one with another, and see, not only what our Sisters did, but, so far as it is on record, how they did it, a light streams over the pages as we read them. It is no longer simple maceration of the flesh ; we lose sight of the material suffering and the painful association of wounds and bruises ; these things get spiritualized and form themselves into a wonderful system and harmony, and we find what one might almost call the Dominican ritual of penance.

Concerning some particular mortifications this is specially true, and chiefly of the discipline. It was a part of prayer ; it had its different ways of being performed, and its different intentions. Now the motive is satisfaction, now thanksgiving, now intercession at one time for the living, at another for the dead. Sometimes it is to subdue temptations, at other times to animate the heart to courage ; often, and perhaps this is the loftiest and most spiritual of all its motives, it is taken in a spirit of deep sympathy with the Passion of Christ, in union with His unutterable humiliations, and is itself made to be essentially contemplation of His sufferings and an exercise of prayer.

When, therefore, we are tempted to shrink with a purely natural repugnance from these practices, and to consider them as in some sort opposed to refinement, or what we are often pleased to call delicacy, it cannot be without its use to consider them in the way in which the Saints regarded them ; and by dwelling more on the spirit in which



such penances were performed than on the material details, to get a truer and higher feeling regarding one of their chief means of sanctification.

Perhaps it is owing to the law of the Dominican Institute, which joins action and contemplation together in all things, that these exterior mortifications were so general. In the teaching of our Order body and spirit are never separated ; and the instances which we have given of the combination of exterior acts with prayer might be multiplied indefinitely. Not that ceremonial or outward form was ever given a preponderance over interior devotion ; but still we must all see that, with us, form and ceremony are used very largely, that the body is called on to pay its share of exterior worship, and that a spiritual use of bodily exercises, such as genuflexions, prostrations, inclinations, etc., is looked on amongst us as a valuable means of training the soul to recollection and a religious tone. And, just in the same way and from the same principle, interior mortification alone, without exterior helps and expressions, would be plainly out of harmony with the system of our Order, which in all things keeps its twofold character and labours with one hand on the soul and the other on the body. Nay, the very exterior habit we wear is a continual reminder of this double character with which we are invested ; for, as St. Vincent Ferrer explains, “ the white habit denotes innocence, and the black mantle penance.”

This was the very expression, also, of the mind of St. Dominic himself, than whom we can scarcely find a Saint more severe to his own flesh in all practices of penance. And, not to speak of extraordinary penances, St. Vincent Ferrer’s whole teaching inculcated that ordinary and most imitable kind of austerity which one might rather call a neglect of bodily comfort. What minute, and yet what

easy and by no means extraordinary directions he gives in his spiritual treatise for our conduct at table ! They are full of common sense, too, bidding us beware of listening to the suggestions of the devil not to eat what is necessary. " Eat as much bread as you require," he says, " so that you may be able afterwards to pray, read or write without hindrance." But then, when he proceeds to lay down his rules, do what we will, we cannot escape their applicability to ourselves ; they are so pointed and yet so very common, and so practicable even by the humblest soul that is afraid of aiming at the extraordinary austerities of the Saints, that we cannot persuade ourselves they are not written for each one of us in particular. Next, he goes on to the subject of sleeping, and has a contemptuous hit at the innovation of unauthorised refinements, such as linen pillow-cases. " These delicacies," he said on one occasion, " make the most valiant soldiers weak and effeminate." For himself he slept always on the bare ground. Nevertheless he particularly inculcated a certain degree of cleanliness, which, he said, need never really be opposed to mortification, only he was severe and unmerciful on all fidgetiness in this and every other particular of the kind, and had a great idea of his disciples " roughing it," in such discomforts. Indeed, we have not many " dirty " Saints. Blessed Henry Suso is perhaps the nearest approach to one ; but it is evident that dirt was much opposed to his natural inclination and was perhaps his greatest mortification. Of St. Dominic and St. Catharine alike it is specially recorded that, in their most penitential exercises, they were great lovers of cleanliness.

With St. Catharine mortification seemed a kind of instinct, and one so irresistible as to overcome all the stratagems of her mother to prevent it. Yet who does not

see the spiritualising of these practices in all that is written of her ? For instance, when she held her body under the boiling water in the bath, it was evidently less done with the wish to inflict pain on her flesh than in the pure spirit of prayer. She was thinking, as she afterwards told her confessor, of the sufferings of purgatory. So too Dominica of Paradiso first learnt the use of the discipline from seeing a picture of our Lord's scourging. In her entire ignorance and simplicity she had never heard of such a practice; but a profound sympathy with the Passion and a natural devout instinct taught her to desire to share in His sufferings and humiliations, in which we again see the spiritual part of the penance greatly overmastering the material and exterior act. But of this we will speak hereafter, first giving a few separate facts in connection with some of our Saints and their austerities which are of interest, and may furnish us with matter of meditation. For instance, Angela Tolomei (A.D. 1300) is noted in the Chronicles of the Order for her excessive mortification. Her whole life passed in the performance of acts which would be incomprehensible and perhaps blameable, but for the explanation which we find in the earlier part of her history. Angela was niece to Nera Tolomei (A.D. 1230-1287) and sister to John Baptist Tolomei (A.D. 1320). She had lived an ordinary, but not a sinful, life in the world, and died. John Baptist, by the power of God, raised her to life again on condition that she should exactly perform her penance on this earth. For, it is said, " knowing by revelation the pains his sister was suffering in purgatory, he prayed to God that she might be permitted to discharge the debt due to His justice more easily and with greater profit in this world." This " easier " way of purification was a life spent in obscure caverns, macerating the flesh

with every invention of torture. No one pretends that such practices are imitable ; yet what a light they throw on the awfulness of God's justice, on our own debt, on the pains of purgatory, the punishment of sin, and the guilt of an ordinary life in a baptised soul !

Many of our Saints are actually recorded to have fully discharged their debt of temporal punishment in this life by their penances ; this is said of the lay-sister, Anne Sanz, the description of some of whose mortifications is almost too painful to read. Yet this was the "easy" purgatory. We may here observe how significant is the practice of the Order which teaches us always to pray for the souls in purgatory before entering our refectory, thus, as the occasion of mortification and the opportunity of indulgence comes round, reminding us of the debts of our sins and the rigours of God's justice.

Angela Tolomei learnt her austerities amid the flames of purgatory, but we find an instance of another holy soul, Jane of St. Dominic (A.D. 1511), who acquired the same lessons amid the glory of heaven. The story is thus told. She was once conversing with her religious Sisters, and, as it would seem, was greatly humbled at seeing how far they surpassed her in the science of perfection. This thought plunged her into a profound self-abasement for three days, at the end of which time she had an ecstasy. It seemed to her that angels carried her to heaven, took off her earthly garments, and clothed her in others as brilliant as the sun. Then, carrying her step by step through all the choirs of the heavenly hierarchy, they brought her at length before the very throne of God. There she was instructed in all perfection, its degrees and the various methods of attaining them ; after which her resplendent garments were taken from her, and she was sent back to

earth again to acquire that perfection which God had revealed to her. "Having, therefore," it is said, "learnt in this rapture many maxims which lead to heaven, she set herself to practise one only, *viz.*, to esteem that day as lost in which she had practised no mortification."

There is a saying of Magdalen Orsini's so pithy and instructive that it deserves insertion. Someone said to her, speaking on the subject of mortification: "For my part, I combat my feelings by fleeing from them and getting out of their way." "That is scarcely enough," she replied; "you must sometimes meet them face to face and affront them."

Another thing to be considered is that the Saints of greatest austerity have not been of the most austere character, nor have they been led to the practice of penance by any natural severity or constitutional harshness of temperament. Blessed Henry Suso was by nature effeminate, we might say almost cowardly. He evidently pitied himself a good deal; and, even whilst he yielded to the powerful divine inspiration which led him to practise such terrific penance, he recounts his sufferings in lamentable terms. Magdalen Angelica went to her penance "trembling all over with terror;" and nothing can be imagined sweeter, gentler or more amiable than the natural character of St. Rose. All these things it is well to remember, in order to avoid associating austerity of mortification with what is popularly called austerity of character, which means a severe, morose disposition; whereas the most mortified have ever been the brightest and the sweetest of the Saints.

We remark also in all the inventions of penance an effort, not merely to mortify the flesh, but far more to humble the spirit and imitate the sufferings of Christ.

Thus Frances of St. Peter (A.D. 1628) never gave an alms without asking the objects of her charity to spit in her face. Perhaps some may think she at least had some claim to be considered a "dirty" Saint, but who does not see that she was absorbed in the humiliations of our Lord? And so we read of her, "she was greedy of contempt, and drank in mockeries and injuries as though they had been her mother's milk, for the love of Christ."

Agatha of the Cross seemed to live in a continual realisation of our Lord's sufferings, and from this instinct, rather than from the actual intention of performing any distinct act of penance, she was constantly imitating, the details of His Passion. If she walked in the fields, she trod on the stones and briars and stained them with her blood, thinking all the while of His painful journey to the height of Calvary. Once she was met coming home with an enormous faggot on her shoulders, almost in ecstasy; she was thinking of our Lord carrying His cross, and in spirit was bearing it after Jesus.

Inasmuch as we could scarcely go through every kind of austerity without wearying our readers, we will take one, the commonest and the most general in our Order, the discipline, and see some of the ways in which our Saints have spiritualised and sanctified its use. St. Dominic, we are told, every night took three disciplines, one for the conversion of sinners, one for the dead, and one for his own sins; and the practice has, since his day, been so faithfully imitated by his children that we can hardly find a single Saint of the Order, man or woman, of whom the same is not recorded. We find two kinds of intentions associated with this penance, one of prayer or intercession and another entirely of contemplation of the Passion or of other divine mysteries. In one of the

apparitions of Sister Jane of St. Catharine (A.D. 1592-1625) to the novice, Sister Magdalen of St. Alexis (A.D. 1610-1631), we find her expressly teaching her young disciple one of these ways of using the discipline. She was to take it three times during the week, the first time in honour of the Most Holy Trinity, the second of the Blessed Virgin, and the third of the Passion of Christ, each time with appropriate prayers. Nor is this the only instance in which our Saints have been taught on this subject by heavenly messengers. It formed part of the instruction of the angel to Francesca Vacchini. "Every evening you shall take the discipline, and it shall be in the following manner : on Monday for the extirpation of pride throughout the whole world ; on Tuesday of covetousness ; on Wednesday of lust ; on Thursday of envy ; on Friday of gluttony ; on Saturday of anger ; on Sunday of sloth ; and so by the end of the week you will have laboured for the extirpation of the seven deadly sins." It seems that Francesca's fidelity to this instruction was a particular pain and mortification to the devil. She always took her penance before the crucifix, meditating on the scourging of Christ, and made it the occasion of commending to God all those who desired her prayers, and specially the Sodality of the Nine Choirs, of which she was the foundress and mother. The fruit of these penitential prayers was so great that the devil did everything in his power to interrupt and prevent them. He even appeared to her once in the likeness of our Blessed Lord carrying His Cross, and, after thanking her for her fervour, bade her, however, not afflict her body with such excessive rigour. Sometimes he would take the form of persons of the house, to induce Francesca to believe she was not alone ; but he was always conquered by her

perseverance and habitual trust in God ; and, whilst it is said, " he trembled when he saw her with the discipline in her hand," which was to rob him of so many souls, he also " wondered to see her constancy and admirable fortitude."

Jane of the Conception (A.D. 1580), when asked to moderate her austerities, used to say she must expiate by dint of hard blows the pleasures she had formerly enjoyed in the world ; and in all her voluntary sufferings she never lost sight of the Passion of Christ.

Nera Tolomei most perfectly united these two methods. She used to take the discipline five times a day, at the hours of the Passion : at midnight for her own sins ; at Prime for the sins of her relations ; at Sext for the souls in purgatory ; at Vespers for all Christians ; and at Compline for heretics and infidels ; and each time with meditations suitable to the hour.

Violanta de Silva (A.D. 1590) had a special devotion to help those in their agony, and always took a severe discipline whilst any Sister of her convent was dying. Blessed Stephana of Soncino departed somewhat from the usual intentions, and in her three disciplines placed herself along with other sinners and made the intention which should have been for her own sins, to soothe the sufferings of her Divine Bridegroom, a trait of tenderness worthy of one who was in truth the spouse of the Crucified. Sister Elizabeth of the Monastery of our Lady of Zamora was remarkable for her assiduous meditation on the sufferings of our Lord, which led her to practise severe austerities that she might bear some resemblance to Him Who had undergone so much for the love of her. We read that, every day during the year which preceded her death, she gave herself fifteen blows of unusual severity in honour of the fifteen most painful mysteries of the Passion, meditating on the wounds



of Christ and imploring Him with tears to show her mercy. These are but a few out of a vast variety of ways in which this particular penance was turned into prayer.

If it be alleged that the degree of penance to be practised by each one is not a matter of choice, but must be regulated by obedience, there is an answer to be met with even to this in the practice of the Saints. Some kinds of penance are certainly always within the limits of obedience, and of these we find as many examples as of any others. For instance, there is Jane of St. Catharine, who found secret ways of practising penance all day long, never moving her feet or changing her position whilst saying Office, never approaching the fire save when commanded to do so, etc. ; and of the like acts of mortification she bound herself to practise a given number every day. There is, too, a certain contempt for and disregard of bodily ailments which Mary of Jesus did not hesitate to place in the rank of mortifications ; “ for,” she said, “ women who are naturally delicate must suffer something every day ;” and she laid her children under obedience to disregard these little murmurs of the body. “ All difficulty in mortification,” she was accustomed to say in chapter, “ is for the cowardly.” Her life, wholly imitable, without a single miracle, and most minutely recorded, is perhaps one of the most useful on record ; and, in the matter of exterior austerities, its teaching is distinct and unmistakable. And yet, lest we should seem to assert that in our Chronicles God’s justice is made too terrible and the necessity of an exact discharge of bodily penance absolute and rigorous, let us conclude with what we may really call an indulgence granted by God to Agatha of the Cross. She was grown old and infirm, unable to practise penance, and yet continually urged and inspired to pray for the living and to

relieve the dead. "Alas ! my God," said the venerable Sister, as she wept over her incapacity and infirmity, "what can I do ? I have nothing now to offer in satisfaction for these poor souls." Then God delivered her from this distress of mind, and taught her two prayers, which she was often to repeat in lieu of her former penances. The first was for herself, and was as follows :

"Eternal Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ Thy Son and my Divine Redeemer, I beseech Thee to pardon me all the faults and imperfections which, during the whole course of my life, I have ever committed against Thy holy Will in thought, word and deed, or by omission of that which I was bound to do for the service of my neighbour. Be pleased to cleanse and purify my heart, that I may never grieve Thee more." "This prayer," said our Lord, "you are always to repeat before you pray for any one else, in order to appease Me if I am angry with you. You shall then pray for the souls in purgatory as follows : 'Eternal Father, for the sake of Jesus, Thy Divine Son, and for the love which moved Him to become man and to suffer as man, and by the merits of His most holy Passion and Death, and by the infinite love wherewith He shed all His Blood for us, I pray and conjure Thee to release from purgatory the souls of all my relations and friends, my confessors and spiritual fathers who have helped me with their advice and counsel, my benefactors, and all those who have wished me ill and persecuted me, and, in general, I pray on behalf of all souls detained there by Thy justice.' "

"You will say this prayer often during the day," continued our Lord, "and each time a certain relief will be afforded these souls." "But how is it possible," answered Agatha, "that for so small a thing Thou wilt show so

great a grace as the deliverance of a soul from purgatory ?” “ The remembrance of My Passion,” He replied, “ renewed therein, is of such value that I cannot choose but pour out My mercies on those on whose behalf it is invoked.”

There is a further consolation for those who, by weakness of health or obedience, are debarred from many exterior practices of penance ; and it is to be found in the faithful observance of silence, that primary law of the Dominican Institute, the daily pressure of which is felt by some souls to be more penitential than any intermittent exercise of austerity. The custom, indeed, now prevails in the Order of allowing a daily recreation after dinner and supper ; but in the early days this was not the case ; the silence, except in case of necessity, appears to have been inviolable ; and the accounts left us of the manner in which it was observed in the Convent of Bologna under the government of Blessed Reginald (A.D. 1220) are truly wonderful. For instance, we read of the whole community being roused in the middle of the night by a horrible scuffle between one of the religious and the devil, who seized and dragged him through the church and dashed him against the wall. The others endeavoured to rescue him, vainly endeavouring to drive away the enemy ; at length Reginald himself came and delivered him ; and, it is said, notwithstanding the terrors of that night, no one spoke or so much as uttered a single sound.

We read of Anne of Jesus (A.D. 1609) that, during the thirty-five years of her religious life, she was never known to infringe the law of silence ; and of Mary of Seville that for thirty years she was never known to address any one except her superiors. Catharine of the Angels and Maria Lanza (A.D. 1603) compelled themselves to observe the law

of silence by means of little stones which they kept in their mouth in silence-time. Some, like Mary of Jesus, were so scrupulous in this matter that when compelled to answer any necessary question they did it in writing. Jane of St. Catharine was a great lover of silence, and one day, being sent into the garden to divert herself, she persuaded her companion to keep silence one half-hour in honour of St. Catharine and the next in honour of St. Dominic.

Silence has ever been the great instrument of reform in times of laxity. Silence and the ceremonies of the Order were the two means employed by St. Dominic in his task of reforming the nuns of Rome. It was the same with Magdalen Orsini, who held it to be the principal means of re-establishing regular life. If ever she herself transgressed in this matter, she would appear in the refectory with a padlock on her lips. Sometimes, by order of her confessor, Mary of Jesus was accustomed to pray to the Blessed Virgin for the grace of silence ; for, she used to say, our Blessed Lady must certainly have acquired the perfection of it. It is mentioned of a religious of the monastery of Unterlinden, of the name of Mechtilde, that she broke silence once only during the whole of her religious life. For, one night in summer, at the conclusion of Matins, the community were all surprised to see the daylight ; and Mechtilde, turning in her simplicity to her Sisters, exclaimed : " Why, dear Sisters, it is already day !" They all smiled ; but Mechtilde, recollecting herself, wept long and bitterly over her unpremeditated fault. Sister Raphael of Faenza (A.D. 1547) was a great reformer in her day, and consequently a great enforcer of silence. Its infraction was the one fault she would not pardon ; and, if she ever came across any one speaking in the dormitories

or other places of silence, the correction was prompt and severe ; for Sister Raphael was wont to wear a discipline by her side with her rosary, and used it on any delinquent without respect of persons.

The Constitutions enjoin inviolable silence in the cloisters of the dead, *i.e.*, those surrounding the cemetery ; and Michael Pio has a terrible story of the consequences which once followed on its infraction. One hot August day in the year 1560 the young religious of the Convent of Brescia, not being able to find a cool place in which to recreate, went, about the time of the *Ave Maria*, into the garden adjoining these cloisters, where the cool shade was very inviting. Sitting down on the grass and forgetting the sacredness of the place and the strict rule that forbade a word to be spoken there, they began to talk and jest, and, as it would seem, with somewhat unbecoming freedom. The cloister quadrangle adjoined the church ; and, as they were thus engaged, they suddenly perceived the door leading into the sacred building slowly open, and heard a strange noise proceeding from within. All eyes turned in that direction ; and what was their horror at seeing a number of black and hideous figures ! There were about twenty of them ; and they came towards the religious with a threatening aspect. All started to their feet and were about to take to flight, but presently, regaining courage, they determined to stay and see the end. So they remained until the strange figures drew near, but when they saw the awful appearance they presented, they turned and fled hurriedly away, never stopping till they reached the dormitory. This fact was publicly known and talked of as a punishment from heaven on those who profaned the sacred law of silence.

We read of Samuel of Casacalenda that he would

answer no questions put to him in the time of deep silence\* (*i.e.*, before Prime) until he had first said that Hour to himself; he would then return to give the necessary answer. It is of him also that so many other instances of scrupulous exactitude to Rule are related; as of his obedience to the bell; for, it is said, he spent his time in his cell prostrate on the ground in prayer; and, as soon as the first stroke of the bell was heard, he was to be seen hurrying to obey its summons, often with the dust remaining on his face and clothes, which he did not give himself time to remove.

In southern countries there is a second deep silence in the middle of the day, and it was on one of these occasions that a certain Father Benedict gave a remarkable instance of his observance of rule. The governor of the city, having affairs of importance to transact with him, chose this hour for his visit. The convent was sunk in silence, when he insisted on forcing his way to Father Benedict's cell and summoned him to the door by a vigorous knock. Benedict gently whispered, "Your Excellency is not aware that the bell for silence has just rung," and retired into his cell again. The chance of making an enemy for life was of course considerable; but fortunately the governor was edified instead of being offended, and spread far and wide the reputation of the Friars and their strict observance.

Blessed Egidius (A.D. 1185-1265) was one who attained to great excellence in the virtue of silence. In the world he had been remarkably loquacious and he endured much

\* Our Constitutions enjoin that silence shall be observed with the utmost rigour till after Prime has been recited in the morning. At other times it is allowable to speak in case of necessity, provided it be done briefly and in a low tone.

in the effort to overcome this habit ; yet those who knew him in religion affirmed that after his conversion he was never known to utter an idle word. The Venerable Sister Mencia (A.D. 1598) never spoke on days of Communion, in order not to interrupt by intercourse with creatures the sweetness of the divine communications. Father James of Sestio (A.D. 1426-1493), whose indulgence in matters of dispensation from Rule was known to all his religious, nevertheless always showed unrelenting severity towards a breach of silence. On being asked the reason of this apparent inconsistency, he replied, " It is no necessary part of perfection to fast and abstain ; but breaches of silence and in irreligious manner kill the souls of others and can never be tolerated in the house of God."

## PART II

### DOMINICAN DEVOTIONS

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#### CHAPTER I

##### THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

DEVOTION to the Blessed Sacrament has always been one of the characteristic devotions of the Dominican Order, and from the earliest times has entered into the Dominican "Spirit." As early as A.D. 1490 we read of the Perpetual Adoration being kept up in the Monastery of Santa Maria at Vera, where the Blessed Sacrament was always exposed and a number of the Brethren watched before It night and day. Catharine of Herrera erected a confraternity under the patronage of our Lady, one of the obligations of which was to provide for the exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament twice every year, during the entire octaves of the Annunciation and of Corpus Christi, and every week to cause two Masses to be said in honour of the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Holy Eucharist. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament seems indeed to have been a frequent devotion in our Order, at a time when it was not so commonly practised in the Church as now.

As regards care of and reverence towards the altar we have several beautiful examples in the lives of our Sisters.



Teresa de la Cerda, who made her profession in the Convent of Jaen A.D. 1508, had a favourite statue of the Infant Jesus, and was fond of making little dresses for it and ornaments for its altar. One day, whilst busy in this way, she heard a voice which said, "Teresa, you do much, and take great pains, for the painted figure of Jesus, but nothing for the living Jesus ;" which words she understood to refer to the Blessed Sacrament. Thenceforth she entirely devoted herself to working for our Lord in His veiled presence on the altar and is said to have even made a tabernacle, which was one of the most beautiful in Spain. She had the care of washing the corporals, a duty which she discharged with such devotion that it was her custom never to stir from the place where they were hung to dry, until they were removed, in order that she might prevent the flies from settling on them ; and this act of reverence was so pleasing to our Lord that He allowed her once to see Him in the form of a beautiful infant lying on the corporal and folding it round Him.

Mary of Jesus was another whose love manifested itself in a special care and reverence for the altar. Whilst still in the world she would take upon herself the charge of washing all the altar-linen and keeping the altar clean and decent. In the village where her husband's country house was situated, the Blessed Sacrament was left without any lamp, a neglect which sensibly afflicted her and which she was not slow to remedy. She provided a lamp and every evening brought the oil and trimmed it herself, and was often overheard exclaiming as she did so, "Oh that my blood could serve instead of oil for Thy Lamp, my God. How gladly would I give it !"

We read of the singular devotion with which Blessed John Massias (A.D. 1584-1645), one of our beatified

lay-brothers, served Mass and adorned the church for solemn feasts. His moments of recreation were those spent in the discharge of his duties as assistant sacristan. Corpus Christi was his great day, when he delighted with all the simplicity of a child in devising new ways of decorating the church and convent for the solemn procession of the Most Holy Sacrament.

Whenever the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, Dominica Torres (A.D. 1590) remained on her knees before It during the entire day, never stirring from the church and spending the whole time of exposition without rest or nourishment. Half, or more than half, her life might be said to have been spent in adoration; for she watched before the altar during almost the entire night. On one occasion a token of the divine favour was given to Clare of Jesus Christ during her solitary vigils; for, finding the lamp extinguished, she complained tenderly to her Spouse and on rising from her prostration she found the light once more burning brightly and steadily.

It would be hopeless to attempt anything like an enumeration of those whose watch before the Blessed Sacrament from Compline to Matins or from Matins to Prime was part of their daily rule of life. The practice is of such constant recurrence that it cannot be numbered among the extraordinary devotions of the Saints. It seems to have been a common thing, customary in most convents, thus to spend half the night at the foot of the altar; and it was by no means taken as a sign of more than ordinary sanctity. The fruits of this continual intercourse with our Lord must doubtless have been very great. One day, when Sister Francis of St. Dominic had successfully repelled a temptation of the devil, she commanded him to tell her why it was he so plagued and tormented

the souls of religious. "Because," he replied, "they are always before the tabernacle and so have a remedy for all their imperfections."

Of all Dominican Saints St. Thomas Aquinas is the one whose name is most closely linked with the Adorable Sacrament. When he presented to Pope Urban IV. the first part of his *Catena Aurea*, the delighted Pontiff wished, in token of gratitude, to raise him to the episcopate. But the Saint threw himself on his knees and implored the Holy Father to grant, as the only reward he would ever accept for his labours, that the feast of the Blessed Sacrament, already established through the prayers of Blessed Juliana of Retinne and the influence of the Dominican Cardinal Hugh of Saint-Cher (A.D. 1262) in Germany and the Low Countries, should be extended to the universal Church. Urban gladly consented and ordered St. Thomas to write the Office of the Feast. In this Office each of the responsories at Matins is composed of two sentences, one drawn from the Old and the other from the New Testament, which are thus made to render their united testimony to the great central mystery of Catholic belief. With its hymns, the *Verbum supernum* and the *Pange lingua*, all the faithful are familiar, and especially with their concluding stanzas, the *O Salutaris* and the *Tantum ergo*. The *Lauda Sion*, whose martial strains cause our hearts to thrill within us in processions of the Blessed Sacrament, also comes to us from the pen of St. Thomas, as well as the *Adoro Te*, the *Anima Christi*,\* and beautiful prayers before and after Communion.

When the Saint was teaching at Paris about A.D. 1269

\* This prayer is sometimes called the Prayer of St. Ignatius, not because he composed it, for it is found in St. Thomas's works, but because he frequently used it.

the Doctors of the University referred to his decision a controversy which had arisen concerning the sacramental species in the Holy Eucharist. After long and fervent prayer St. Thomas put his own opinion on the subject into writing, laid the manuscript on the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, and then prayed as follows: "Lord Jesus, Who art truly present and dost work wonders in this adorable Sacrament, I implore of Thee that, if what I have written be the truth, Thou wilt enable me to teach it; but that, if it contains anything contrary to the truth, Thou wilt hinder me from proceeding further in declaring it." Then the other Friars, who were watching, beheld our Lord Himself descend and stand upon the manuscript; and they heard from His divine lips the words: "Thomas, thou hast written well concerning the Sacrament of My Body."

St. Thomas, like so many other members of the Order, after the short time absolutely necessary for sleep, was accustomed to rise in the night and come down to the church to pray, returning to his cell with touching humility just before the bell rang for Matins, that his vigil might pass unnoticed. He would then go down again to Office with the community, often prolonging his prayers till daybreak. After preparing by penance, confession and meditation he used to celebrate the first Mass, and for his thanksgiving heard another Mass, which he often served. Very beautiful is the account left us of his last Communion. When the Holy Viaticum was brought to him, he raised himself into a kneeling posture and said in a clear and distinct voice, whilst the tears chased each other down his face: "I receive Thee, the price of my soul's ransom; I receive Thee, the viaticum of my soul's pilgrimage: for whose love I have studied, watched and laboured, preached

and taught." Just before receiving the Sacred Host he uttered his favourite ejaculation, which he had been accustomed to use at the Elevation in the Mass : " Thou, O Christ, art the King of glory ; Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father."

Another of our canonised Saints, St. John of Cologne, one of the martyrs of Gorcum (A.D. 1572), may be called the Martyr of the Blessed Sacrament ; for life and liberty were offered to himself and his companions if they would deny the doctrines of the Real Presence and of the Papal Supremacy.

We have an account of one Friar who died in his attempt to preserve the Blessed Sacrament from fire. This was Alfonso Garces (A.D. 1580). The flames had attacked the cloister and spread to the church, where Alfonso was watching in prayer. He ran to call his Brethren, but all had fled. He might have escaped himself, but he could not resolve to abandon our Lord ; and, returning to the church, he opened the Tabernacle, took out the Ciborium, and placed it in his breast. Then, carrying his precious burden, he once more attempted to leave the church, but it was too late ; the fire was in possession of the whole building and the falling roof buried him beneath its ruins. One of his companions, to whom he was very dear, was overwhelmed with grief at a death which seemed so sad and terrible ; but one night, as he lay weeping and praying for his soul, Alfonso appeared, bright and beautiful, and stood by his bedside. " Is it you ?" said his bewildered friend. " Where are you living ?" " In heaven," replied Alfonso ; " it is now three days since I was admitted to the beatific vision." This was on the third day after the fire, so the Friar knew that he had been received into heaven on the very day of his decease.

A still more glorious death was that of an Armenian Friar, Father Matthew Nascascen (A.D. 1597). He was living in his convent with one companion and was in the act of saying Mass, at which the other served, when the Turkish chief with fifty horsemen rode up to the door, and, making his way into the church just as the Sacred Host was being elevated, rudely commanded Father Matthew to come and hold their horses. Matthew laid the Divine Victim again on the altar ; then, turning round, he begged the chief to wait till he had finished Mass and he would do his bidding. The Turks surrounded the altar, cursing and blaspheming, but did not touch him, till he turned to give the last blessing, when the brutal commander struck his head against the corner of the altar so violently that his vestments were dyed in blood. " Dog of an infidel," he exclaimed, " wilt thou leave thy Mass and serve me ?" " I will not leave the service of God for thine," firmly answered Matthew. As he said so, his enemy pushed him to his knees and struck off his head, so that his blood was sprinkled on the very altar, on which but a moment before he had concluded the Holy Sacrifice, and beneath which his relics were afterwards interred.

One of the most beautiful of all the stories connected with the Adorable Sacrament is that of Blessed Imelda (A.D. 1322-1333), whose name is said to be derived from the Latin *Quasi mel data* (*as honey given*). It is an oft-told tale ; but we cannot omit it here. She belonged to the noble Bolognese family of the Lambertini, and had been consecrated to God at an early age in the Dominican Convent of St. Mary Magdalen. Here she devoted herself to observe the rule with the most loving fidelity, giving herself up to exercises of prayer and penance, and by her fervour rendering herself a model even to the oldest

and most saintly of the community. Her great devotion was to Jesus hidden in the Sacrament of His love ; and with all the ardour of her soul did she long for the day when she should be allowed to unite herself to her Lord in Holy Communion. It appears that at that time it was not usual at Bolgona for children to make their First Communion before the age of fourteen. Vainly then did the Blessed Imelda over and over again beseech her confessor to permit her to approach the Holy Table ; but He Who “ feeds among the lilies,” and Who, when He was on earth, said, “ Suffer little children to come to Me and forbid them not,” would not allow the loving young heart to be disappointed. One day, when all the Sisters had been to Holy Communion, Imelda knelt apart in a corner of the choir, pouring forth her acts of fervent desire, and weeping bitterly because she was not allowed to share their happiness. Suddenly a heavenly fragrance filled the sacred precincts ; and, as it diffused itself around, a radiant Host was seen in the air above the head of the saintly child. The astonished nuns immediately summoned the chaplain back to the spot. He came in his sacred vestments, with the paten in his hand, and knelt in wondering adoration, awaiting some further manifestation of the divine Will. Then the Sacred Host gently descended on the paten, and the priest communicated Imelda. The transport of love and joy was too great for the weak bodily frame ; the happy child closed her eyes, and *in osculo Domini* (“ in the kiss of the Lord ”) breathed forth her pure soul to go and make endless thanksgiving in heaven. This miraculous event, which is thoroughly well attested, took place on the eve of the Ascension, May 12, A.D. 1333. Blessed Imelda is probably the youngest Saint, not a martyr, that has ever been raised to the altars of the Church. Her feast is kept on September 16.

Another of our Sisters, Margaret of Ypres (A.D. 1237), more fortunate than Imelda, succeeded in obtaining permission to communicate when only four years old. When she made her request, the Abbess of the convent in which she was being brought up, astonished to hear her mention the subject at all at so early an age, enquired why it was she asked. "Because," was the reply, "I know that in the little Host which the nuns receive from the priest, there is Jesus Christ my Saviour, Whom I love so much."

In the beautiful visions vouchsafed to Magdalen of St. Alexis we find reverence to the altar inculcated by the example of the Blessed Virgin herself and the Saints who accompanied her, who, before disappearing, prostrated themselves to the ground before the Adorable Sacrament.

When St. Rose had been mystically espoused to our Lord with the words, "Rose of My Heart, be thou My spouse," she resolved to have a ring made which she might always wear as a memorial of the immense favour which had been conferred upon her. She entrusted her brother with the commission, begging him to have a motto engraved on the ring. The young man, who knew nothing of what had passed, reflected for a moment, and then wrote down the very words which the Divine Infant had used: "Rose of My Heart, be thou My spouse." The Saint joyfully acquiesced, recognising in this wonderful coincidence a fresh proof of the love of her Divine Spouse. The ring was brought to her on Maundy Thursday morning; and she begged the sacristan of the Dominican church to place it where the Blessed Sacrament was to repose. Her request was complied with; and on Easter Sunday the Saint suddenly beheld the ring on her finger, without knowing how it came there. We read, also, of the pains taken by the same Saint to grow beautiful flowers for the decoration



of the altar during the Forty Hours' Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

In the exquisite collection of Lives of our Sisters of Unterlinden, near Colmar in Alsace, there is a beautiful story about a certain Sister Hedwiges of Laufenberg. She once lovingly said to our Lord in prayer : " Dearest Lord, I wish not to be delayed a single moment after death from the vision of Thy glory ;" to which He graciously replied : " To-morrow in the Mass I will offer Myself as a sacrifice for thy sins ; and then thy iniquity shall be blotted out for ever." Of Sister Maria de Santiago we read that her love of the Blessed Sacrament was such that she had at last come to make a spiritual communion at almost every breath she drew.

Indeed, it is impossible to read the history of any of our Saints without finding that the Most Holy Sacrament was the sun and centre of their lives. We have purposely refrained from quoting the Life of our seraphic Mother St. Catharine, because of the superabundant materials to be found there on this subject ; but we would remind our readers that she did much to restore frequent Communion at a time when the practice had fallen into disuse in the Church. Three other illustrious members of the Order, Tauler, St. Vincent Ferrer and Savonarola, were also great promoters of frequent Communion and contributed not a little to revive the practice now so happily established in the Church.

To conclude with the example of our Holy Father St. Dominic. We read of him that, when a boy, serving Mass with others of his age, he preached to all beholders by the reverence of his manner and the holiness of his looks ; indeed, this is the first thing chronicled in his life which marks out to us the character of the future Saint.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS

AT the close of the Council of Lyons, A.D. 1274, Blessed Gregory X., the reigning Pontiff, addressed a Bull to the Dominican Order, by which he commanded the Brethren to preach devotion and reverence to the Most Holy Name of Jesus with a view to extirpating the vice of blasphemy. The General, John of Vercelli, entered warmly into the Holy Father's views, and published a devout circular, in which he acquainted the Brethren with the honourable commission which had been entrusted to them, and exhorted them to discharge it with the utmost diligence. He was obeyed with alacrity ; and in a short time it was ordained that there should be an Altar of the Holy Name in every church of the Order.

In the year 1432 the kingdom of Portugal was attacked by pestilence. The people recognised in the terrible visitation the just punishment of their sins, and earnestly implored the divine mercy. Now there was at this time residing in the Dominican Convent of Lisbon a venerable Father, Andrew Diaz by name, who had been Bishop of Megara in Greece but had resigned his See. This holy man exhorted the people to endeavour to appease the wrath of God by means of devotion to the Holy Name. With this view he established a confraternity and blessed water in honour of this adorable Name, by means of which God was pleased to work many miracles ; and in a month's time the city was delivered from the plague.

From Portugal the confraternity seems to have spread

into Spain, specially through the preaching of Father Diego Vittoria, who by its means strenuously combated the vice of blasphemy. The rules of the confraternity not only obliged its members to abstain from all profane use of the Holy Name and always to pronounce it with the utmost reverence, but also to exhort others to do in like manner and charitably to reprove any whom they might hear taking God's Name in vain. The confraternity spread in time over every part of the world where the sons of St. Dominic were to be found, reaching even to far-off Japan, as we shall have occasion to mention in our next chapter. It was enriched with indulgences by Pope Pius IV. and subsequent Pontiffs, who also decreed that it should always have its headquarters in Dominican churches and should not be established in any others without the licence of the General of the Order. The principal festival of the confraternity is the feast of the Circumcision. It is usual in Dominican churches to have a solemn procession in honour of the Holy Name on the second Sunday of every month. Our Saints have vied with each other in their love and devotion for the saving Name of Jesus.

Of Brother Henry of Cologne (A.D. 1225), the bosom-friend of Blessed Jordan, we read that in his sermons "he used to admonish his hearers that the Name of Jesus, which is above every name, is most worthy of love and worship ; so that to this day, whenever that sacred Name is mentioned in the church, the hearts of all are moved to manifest their reverence." Blessed Jordan himself composed a devout exercise in its honour, similar to that by which he was wont to honour the holy Name of Mary. It is to be found in the *Raccolta*, and consists of five Psalms beginning with the initial letters of the Name of Jesus, viz., the 42nd, 19th, 128th, 12th, and 136th, concluding with

the Versicle, Response and Prayer of the Holy Name. The very sound of this most sweet Name sufficed to throw Blessed Egidius (A.D. 1190-1263) into ecstasy ; and it was miraculously inscribed in letters of gold on the heart of Blessed Catharine of Raconigi, *Jesu, spes mea* ! ("Jesus, my Hope !"). St. Peter Martyr (A.D. 1205-1252), John of Vicenza, a contemporary of St. Dominic, and Blessed Ambrose of Siena (A.D. 1220-1286) are said to have been great propagators of this devotion.

But of all our Saints Blessed Henry Suso is the one who was most inflamed with love and devotion for the Holy Name. In a transport of fervour he inscribed it with a sharp-pointed instrument on his breast ; and then, all torn and bleeding, threw himself on his knees before the crucifix and exclaimed : " Ah, Lord ! Thou only love of my heart and soul ! look now upon my heart's intense desire. Lord, I cannot imprint Thee any deeper on myself ; but do Thou, O Lord, I beseech Thee, complete the work, and imprint Thyself deep down into my very inmost heart, and so inscribe Thy Holy Name in me, that Thou mayest never more depart from my heart."

The wounds at length healed up ; but the Name of Jesus remained engraven upon his heart until his death. When any trouble befell him, he used to look at the love-token, as he called it, and his trouble became lighter. It was his wont, also, at times to say within himself, " See, Lord, earthly lovers write the name of their beloved on their garments ; but I have written Thine in Blood upon my heart." Once after Matins he was rapt in ecstasy in his cell ; and it seemed to him that a light streamed forth from his heart ; and as he looked, there appeared upon his heart a cross of gold adorned with precious stones, which gave forth in brilliant light the Name of Jesus. Then he

took his mantle and drew it over his heart, intending, if he could, to cover up the bright light which streamed from it, so that no one might behold it ; but all his attempts to hide it were in vain. On the sharp cross which he bore day and night upon his back, he had carved the adorable Name of Jesus, thus to render it more endurable. The Office which he wrote in honour of the Eternal Wisdom is partly composed of selections from St. Bernard's well-known hymn in honour of the Holy Name.

On one occasion our Blessed Lady appeared to Sister Elizabeth Stæglin, a nun of our Order and Blessed Henry's spiritual daughter, and said to her : " Behold, my Child's servant is come hither, and has carried about His sweet Name of Jesus far and wide, with the same ardent desire with which His Apostles carried it of old ; and, just as their desire was to make all men know this Name through the preaching of the faith, even so all his strivings have been to set cold hearts on fire with new love for this Name of Jesus. Therefore he shall receive, after his death, an everlasting reward with them." Afterwards Sister Elizabeth saw our Lady holding a beautiful candle in her hand ; its brightness illumined the whole world ; and all round the candle was written the Name of Jesus. Then our Lady said to her : " Behold, this burning candle signifies the Name of Jesus ; because He in very truth illumines the hearts of all who receive His Name with devotion, and pay it honour, and bear it lovingly about with them. To this end my Child has chosen out His servant, that devotion to His Name may be lit up through him in the hearts of many, and that these may be helped onward by him to everlasting bliss."

When this holy religious perceived that her spiritual Father was so devout to, and had such firm faith in, the

loving Name of Jesus, she conceived a great and special love for it ; and out of devotion she marked the Name of Jesus in red silk on a little piece of cloth in the following form—**IHS**—and wore it secretly upon herself. She also made an almost countless number of similar Names, and persuaded Blessed Henry to lay them on his heart and then send them with a blessing from God to his spiritual children. Moreover, it was revealed to her that those who bore the Name upon them, and said daily with devotion an Our Father in its honour, would be treated lovingly by God in this world and would find grace before Him at their last passage.

The Rosary of the Holy Name of Jesus, consisting of fifteen mysteries and one hundred and fifty invocations, was composed for the use of the confraternity by Father John Micon (A.D. 1492-1555), a saintly man who, when Prior of Valentia, received St. Lewis Bertrand into the Order. His Holiness Pope Clement VIII., A.D. 1602, attached an indulgence of eight years to the devout recital of this Rosary. Some other Fathers of the Order who also bore a special devotion to the Holy Name, composed a shorter chaplet in its honour, consisting of only three decades and three mysteries, *viz.*, 1, the giving of the Holy Name at the Circumcision ; 2, its inscription on the title of the Cross, and 3, its exaltation and glory in the Resurrection. This devotion also has been approved and indulgenced by the Holy See.

There seems to be reason for believing that the preachers of the Order had some share in bringing about the introduction of the Holy Name into the Hail Mary. Thomas of Cantimpré tells a story of a German religious named Walter of Meysenberg, who had been received into the Order by Blessed Jordan, and who was heard crying

out in his sleep and repeating the words : " Blessed be Jesus ! Blessed be the fruit of thy womb !" " Next morning," says the writer, " I questioned him on the subject and he replied : ' For many years past I have been in the habit of adding the Holy Name of Jesus to the Angelic Salutation and of saying : *Blessed be the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.* Last night the devil tried to strangle me ; and in my terror I invoked the Blessed Virgin, using those same words ; and at once the enemy left me.' "

Marchese in his *Diario Domenicano* concludes his account of the Confraternity of the Holy Name in these words : " I refrain from relating here the miracles worked and graces granted by our Lord to those who have been devout to His Holy Name, because St. John Chrysostom reminds me that ' Jesus is always named when miracles are worked by holy men ;' hence to attempt to enumerate them would be to try to give a list of the countless miracles which God has performed through all the ages, either to increase the glory of His Saints or to plant and strengthen the faith in the hearts of men."

## CHAPTER III

### OUR BLESSED LADY

“ **W**ITH what love and veneration ought we not to regard that incomparable Virgin, the holy Mother of Jesus Christ and our Mother also, to whose care we have been entrusted by the Divine Majesty, under whose wings we are protected, by whose loving hand we are blessed, who bestows on us the dew of so many graces, and who preserves us by her intercession from countless dangers ! Let us be on our guard lest, by any fault of ours, we cause her to turn away from us those eyes of mercy which look with clemency on those who carefully follow the right way.”

It is with these words that Theodoric of Apoldia concludes his account of the vision vouchsafed to St. Dominic at Santa Sabina, on which rests the special claim of the Order to be regarded as Mary's inheritance and possession. Our holy Father, we are told, was rapt in spirit unto God. And he saw the Lord with the Blessed Virgin standing at His right hand ; and it seemed to him that our Lady was dressed in a robe of sapphire blue. And, looking about him, he saw religious of every Order standing before God ; but of his own he did not see one. Then he began to weep bitterly ; and he dared not draw nigh to our Lord or to His Mother ; but our Lady beckoned to him with her hand to approach. Nevertheless he did not dare to come, until our Lord also in His turn had made him a sign to do so. He came, therefore, and fell prostrate before them, weeping bitterly. And the Lord commanded him to rise ;



and when he was risen, He said to him : " Why weepest thou thus bitterly ?" And he answered : " I weep because I see here religious of all Orders except mine own." And the Lord said to him : " Wouldst thou see thine own ?" And he trembling, said : " Yea Lord." Then the Lord placed his hand on the shoulder of the Blessed Virgin, and said to the blessed Dominic : " I have given thine Order to My Mother." Then He said again : " And wouldst thou really see thine Order ?" And he replied : " Yea, Lord." Then the Blessed Virgin opened the mantle in which she seemed to be clothed, extending it before the eyes of Dominic, so that its immensity covered all the space of the heavenly country ; and he saw under its folds a vast multitude of his children. The blessed Dominic fell down to thank God and the Blessed Mary, His Mother ; and the vision disappeared, and he came to himself again and rang the bell for Matins ; and, after Matins were ended, calling the Brethren together, he made them a beautiful discourse on the love and veneration they should bear to the Most Blessed Virgin and related to them what he had seen.

This vision of the children of the Order gathered under the mantle of Mary is recorded as having been granted on at least three other occasions, *viz.*, to a recluse in Lombardy, to a German recluse, and to Blessed Ceslaus (A.D. 1180-1241), the brother of St. Hyacinth.

In the early days of the Order the Brethren went by the name of the " Friars of Mary ;" and innumerable are the stories left us of their childlike trust in her and of her maternal tenderness towards them. One of these as given by Gerald de Frachet in the *Vita Fratrum* we cannot refrain from quoting. In the early days of the Order there was, he tells us, a certain Friar who was ordered to go and

preach to the Cuman Tartars. This obedience troubled him not a little ; and he had recourse to a holy hermit, a friend of his, begging him to commend the matter to God in prayer. The hermit complied with his request and the following night had the vision which we are about to relate. He beheld a great river, and over it a bridge, and men of various Orders crossing it with great joy, but singly. Then he saw Friar-Preachers, not on the bridge, but swimming across the river, and each one drawing after him a chariot full of men. And when some of them seemed exhausted with the labour of drawing their chariots, he saw our Lady stretching out her hand to help them ; and by her assistance they reached the opposite bank in safety. There the hermit saw them in the enjoyment of ineffable delights, together with those whom they had brought with them. When he related this vision to the Brother who had had recourse to him, he was marvellously strengthened by it to undertake his difficult charge, understanding that it behoves a Friar-Preacher to work hard for souls and not to reach heaven alone ; his labours may be painful, but they bring him to unspeakable joys ; and in them he may have the special assistance of the Holy Mother of God.

Like a true Mother our Lady clothed her children, bestowing on them with her own hands that white scapular of which we shall have more to say in a future chapter, “ the most distinguished part of the Dominican habit, the maternal pledge from heaven of the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary towards us,” as we are reminded at the moment of receiving it.

There are two devotions to our Blessed Lady which are in a particular manner connected with the Order, *viz.*, the Rosary, our own special birthright and inheritance, and the *Salve Regina*, solemnly chanted every evening

after Compline in our churches. No authentic account has been left us of the actual giving of the Rosary to our holy Father St. Dominic ; but we learn from an ancient tradition that the words of our Lady were to the effect that heresy should not disappear until prayer should rise from the earth like drops of dew ; and that the word “ Rosary ” was derived from this dew (Latin *ros*), the drops of which are represented by the beads. Dominic’s preaching was thenceforth in great measure the preaching of the Rosary ; and every day, when his sermon was ended, the audience crowded round the pulpit and received the beads which he distributed among them, carrying them home and laying them on the sick and dying, whom they often restored to health.

Whatever was the origin of this devotion and of its name, the “ Roses of Mary ” soon became the popular term for these wonderful beads, and some of the legends attached to them are full of this idea, as may be seen in the life of Sister Guimar. She was very devout to our Lady ; and, having little time unoccupied in the service of the community, she used to say her Rosary every spare minute at her disposal, and was often hard pressed to find time enough to get through both her work and her prayers. Once, having to winnow some flour, she could only manage to do it by rising in the middle of the night. As she worked, the silence and solitude suggested to her the thought that she might say her Rosary at the same time. So, working at her flour with one hand, she passed the beads through the other, and spent some hours with much delight thus employed, between labour and contemplation. Glancing at length on the table whereon her rosary rested, she beheld a beautiful sight. For as many *Ave Marias* as she had

said, there were white roses, and red ones for the *Pater Nosters*. Scarcely daring to believe her eyes, she continued the recitation of her prayers, and saw indeed, as she finished each, a fresh rose appear on the table. She tried to keep the favour secret, but in vain ; as often as she prayed in public with the others, they too would see the beads turned into a garland of sweet and beautiful roses ; and this so frequently happened that it became the common talk of the town. Of Sister Cecilia of Ferrara (A.D. 1507) we read that her rosary was never out of her hands, and in reward of her assiduous devotion her hands gave out a sweet odour of roses after her death.

To the custom of blessing the roses we find an allusion in the beautiful life of Fr. Raymond Rocco (A.D. 1583-1655), who always kept a canister of these roses in his cell before the image of our Lady, and worked such marvellous cures with them that after his death by the desire of the people a number of little pictures were engraved of him holding a bunch of rose-leaves in his hand. Luke of Pontocorvo (A.D. 1460), " an industrious cultivator of the Roses of Mary," to use the language of his biographer, bore after death on his breast the image of a full-blown rose, which gave out a heavenly odour ; and the like is told of many others. Whenever John of Vicenza, a contemporary of St. Dominic, preached, a rose is said to have appeared on his forehead, like the star of his holy Patriarch, and the people attributed this prodigy, which was seen by all, to his devotion to the Rosary.

There are legends of a different kind from these. It evidently produced a most powerful effect on the whole spirit of prayer in the Order ; for, if we examine the special devotions of our Saints, we shall find that the mysteries of

the Rosary were like an unseen thread, running through them all. Take the story of Magdalen Angelica, whose life was divided according to the three parts of the Rosary. At the commencement of her religious conversion she kept entirely to meditation on the Joyful Mysteries, in order to obtain a childlike gaiety and innocence of heart. Then when she had received the habit of religion, she took the Sorrowful Mysteries to meditate upon, and with them entered upon a long course of austerities and disciplines. And at last she passed on to the Glorious Mysteries ; and heaven rained down a very deluge of light and consolation into her soul, so long left disconsolate on the cross of her agonising Spouse. This light was so divine and wonderful that it often became visible, encircling even her body in a bright luminous cloud. "She acquired all her perfection," says her biographer, "through the meditations of the Rosary ;" and when one Rosary Sunday, towards the close of her life, she knelt before our Lady's altar, and prayed for innocence of heart, the divine Mother spoke to her and said : "Be of good heart, my daughter ; for that which thou prayest for, thou already hast."

Even in the visions of the most mystic of our Saints there is a singular simplicity ; those connected with the Divine Infancy are of most frequent occurrence, exactly as we should expect to find in the case of those accustomed to occupy their minds continually with the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. The crib of Bethlehem was represented over and over again to their eyes as they prayed, and the Nativity seems with all to have been a favourite subject of meditation. Perhaps this accounts for the frequent mention we find of those cribs common amongst ourselves. Thus we read of Blessed Columba of Rieti

that her confessor promised her some figures for her crib, but forgot to procure them, whereat Columba was much disappointed. Then our Lady appeared to comfort her, together with her Divine Son and several angels, who represented the scene exactly as it had happened. When Columba saw the priest next day, she greeted him with a smile. "Thank you, my good Father," she said, "for forgetting your promise ; for it was the means of giving me a better crib than I should have had with your wooden figures." Dominica of Paradiso in her tiny cell in her mother's house had a little altar with the Presepio or crib on it, and this was the only ornament of the room.

Lewis of Aquin, a member of the same family as St. Thomas, was most devout to the Rosary, and composed a series of short meditations in verse on the Mysteries. Whether or not these were popularly used does not appear ; but there are several accounts of processions in which the Rosary was sung, as in the life of Father John of Conca (A.D. 1666), who, when at Manilla, persuaded the Governor to let him do what he liked with the soldiers under arms daily expecting the attack of the Dutch heretics. He preached the Rosary among them to reanimate their faith, and filled both soldiers and sailors with such enthusiasm that all unanimously placed themselves under the patronage of our Lady of the Rosary, and entrusted the defence of the city to her. Every day they met and sang the Rosary in procession ; and, when hostilities commenced, not a man would go to battle till he had said his beads. Five battles were fought and won, as all declared through the intercession of our Lady ; and throughout that war the *Ave Maria* took the place of war-cries and blasphemies. The account of one of these battles is given us in a letter of Father John's to Father Raphael Vacona,

Prior of Manilla. He says that it lasted eleven hours. As soon as the Dutch army arrived in sight and posted itself before the town, all the Spanish soldiers burst out into their Rosary song ; and John went through their ranks, encouraging them by the promise of a glorious victory without the loss of one man, as indeed happened, though the enemy lost a vast number. Shortly after this John was recalled to his native country of New Spain, and immediately on his arrival in America began as usual reviving and establishing Confraternities of the " Roses of Mary " in every town. Four times a week the Rosary was publicly recited, nobles, peasants and students of the University all vying with one another in their eagerness to enrol themselves under the banner of the Mother of God. Among other practices he introduced that of the Perpetual Rosary, by which one hour in the year was assigned to each associate for the recitation of an entire Rosary ; so that the Rosary went on night and day without intermission, as does the veneration of the most Holy Sacrament in the Confraternity of the Perpetual Adoration.

Blessed Antony Neyrot, who was martyred at Tunis A.D. 1460, died clasping his rosary ; and Blessed Alphonsus Navarette, who suffered for the faith in Japan A.D. 1617, knelt to receive the stroke of the executioner with a wooden cross in one hand and his rosary and a blessed candle in the other. Both the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary and that of the Holy Name were exceedingly popular among the Christians of Japan, as appeared on the occasion of the " Great Martyrdom," as it is called, which took place at Nangasaki, September 10, A.D. 1622. Of the fifty-seven martyrs who gained their crowns on that day, eleven were members of the Order, and twenty-eight belonged to the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary.

We are told that they advanced to the place of execution in two processions, singing Psalms and Litanies and the *Te Deum*. One company was headed by a Christian carrying the banner of the Confraternity of the Holy Name, which was of red damask, embroidered with the sacred Names of Jesus and Mary in letters of gold ; whilst at the head of the second company walked the directress of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, clad in the distinctive dress of the confraternity and bearing aloft its banner. Several other members of the Order and of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, amounting in all to upwards of one hundred, are numbered amongst the beatified martyrs of Japan.

When missionaries once more made their way into that country about A.D. 1865, after it had been for two hundred years without a priest, many thousand Christians were still to be found there. They had preserved the Sacrament of Baptism, the prayers of the Church, and the principal doctrines of the faith with an accuracy and depth of intelligence which bore striking testimony to the skill and industry of their first instructors. It is especially interesting to us to notice that among the prayers thus preserved there were found in a book which one of the catechists brought to the missionaries for inspection, some meditations on the Mysteries of the Rosary ; and one family was in possession of a picture of the Fifteen Mysteries. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood were in the habit of coming in pilgrimage to venerate this picture, which was traditionally believed to have been the gift of the early missionaries. May we not, in part at least, attribute the almost miraculous preservation of the faith in Japan to the fidelity with which her people have clung to their favourite devotion of the Holy Rosary ?



Our Lady is recorded to have appeared to Father Raymund Kuazath (A.D. 1625-1667) and given him a rosary, saying it was to be his sword against error. It was to be again the mystic net with which he was "to catch men," to use our Lord's words to St. Peter. "Thou shalt be a fisher of souls," she said, as he afterwards told his Brethren; "and when they foolishly struggle in thy nets, every *Ave Maria* of the Rosary shall be like a hook, and shall draw them lovingly and safely into the bark of Peter." Raymund profited so well by this advice that in two years he brought no less than four hundred heretics to abjure their errors at the hands of Cardinal Spinola, the Apostolic Nuncio; and very often, when arguments failed to convert them, he worked wonderful changes by the repetition of the Hail Mary over them, signing their foreheads with his rosary. Our Lady also appeared to Father John Amato of Valentia (A.D. 1538), saying these words, "Preach my Psalter." He obeyed this injunction literally, for his life passed in reviving the devotion of the Rosary and in the establishment of the confraternity; and many possessed persons were delivered by the touch of his beads. Jerome Baptist Lanuza, even after his elevation to the Episcopate, delighted in nothing so much as in the propagation of this humble and childlike devotion. Every first Sunday of the month he had the Rosary procession in his cathedral, and might be seen taking part in it, clad in his pontifical vestments and with the beads hanging round his neck. In our own country the versified recitation of the Rosary was very common, the verses being probably the production of the Order; and it is consoling to record that the devotion was always a favourite one in England and appears to have been practised here at a time when it had partially fallen into disuse in other lands.

Father Gonzalo Luzero (A.D. 1551) had another way of popularising the Rosary and making it the vehicle of Christian instruction to the Mexican Indians. He caused all the mysteries to be painted on banners ; and, when he was going to preach, he chose his banner, displayed it before his audience, and explained every part which was represented. In this way he was able to teach his followers how to use the pictures, and sent them about the country, provided with these simple kinds of catechisms, by which means the knowledge of the leading truths of Christianity became rapidly diffused.

Father Mariano of Palermo (A.D. 1541) was another who exerted his ingenuity in discovering new methods of profiting by the treasures of the Rosary. He was the first to introduce its choral recitation and the procession at Palermo. With the country people he found great difficulty at first, for their ignorance was so gross that they could not learn *Pater, Ave* or *Credo*. His method of teaching one of these men we may safely call unique. Considering that with all his stupidity in the things of God his pupil was sharp enough in matters of business and remembered all his money accounts as though he had the memory of Mithridates, Father Mariano selected a certain number of poor persons, and persuaded him to lend each of them a different sum of money, to one five, to another eight crowns, and so on, naming each creditor by one of the words of the Hail Mary ; so that one was *Ave Maria*, another *gratia plena*, another *Dominus tecum*, etc. " Questioning him shortly after," says Marchese, " as to the names of those to whom he had lent his money, it was surprising to see the exactness of the happy memory with which he went through the *Ave Maria*, the *Pater* and *Credo* without leaving out a single word."

We read of some of our Sisters cultivating rose-trees for the Rosary Altar, and how, in reward of their devotion, they found white and red roses blooming in the midst of winter, and of some who, being devout in life to our Lady of the Rosary, were favoured after death by a shower of roses which fell from heaven on their coffins.

It does not enter into the plan of the present little sketch to trace the history of the Rosary ; to tell how, for a time, it fell into partial neglect, until revived by the preaching of Blessed Alan de la Roche (A.D. 1475) ; how the miraculous victory of Lepanto, won under the pontificate of the Dominican Pope, St. Pius V. (A.D. 1504-1572), led to the institution of the festival of the Holy Rosary ; nor of the fresh impulse given to the devotion in our own day by him who may truly be called the Pontiff of the Rosary. It is a time to go on to another devotion in honour of our Blessed Lady, which, if not Dominican in its origin, has become so linked with the history of the Order as to be regarded as peculiarly our own ; we refer, of course, to the *Salve Regina*.

From the very beginning of the Order the *Salve* was recited after Compline, as we find from that vision in St. Dominic's life in which we are told that our Lady made herself known to him by saying : " I am she whom you invoke every evening ; and when you say, *Eia ergo, advocata nostra*, I prostrate before my Son for the preservation of this Order." But it was not sung processionally, as it is now, until the time of Blessed Jordan, the successor of St. Dominic, when the dreadful sufferings endured by the Brethren from diabolical apparitions induced him to order it in the Chapter of Paris, A.D. 1226. Its effect was the immediate disappearance of these troublesome visitants ; and in their stead Mary took possession of the

Dominican choirs, as we would fondly hope, never to yield her place to another. It became, if we may say so, the fashionable devotion to go to the church of the Friar-Preachers after Compline to assist at the *Salve*, and many therefore were the witnesses of the heavenly apparitions which our chronicles describe. The Queen of Heaven was seen to descend into the choir, as the Friars came out in procession, and to place herself in the midst of them, and, as they sang the last words, *O dulcis Virgo Maria*, inclining at her sweet name, she blessed them and disappeared. Others again described how, at the words *Eia ergo, advocata nostra*, they saw her prostrate at the feet of her Son, pleading for her favoured children. A devout woman of Lombardy, praying in our church at Marseilles, found her soul filled with a certain marvellous sweetness whilst the Friars were singing the *Salve*; and, being raised in ecstasy, she saw the Divine Mother assisting at the Office, and when the Friars said *Spes nostra, salve*, our Lady graciously returned the salutation, and at the words *Eia ergo* she interceded for them with her Son; and at those other words, *Jesum benedictum*, etc., she held out the Child Jesus to the Brethren, giving Him to each one of them to kiss; and then, blessing them, disappeared. The same thing was likewise seen in the Convent of Montpellier.

It is pleasant to find among the legends of the *Salve* handed down to us from the early days of the Order, two events recorded which probably took place on our own English soil. Gerard de Frachet tells us of a Friar of the English Province who had a sudden attack of illness one night after Matins and continued to suffer pain in the heart throughout the whole of the following day. He managed, however, to drag himself to choir and to sing Compline,

as well as he could, with the rest of the Brethren ; and, when the *Salve* began, greatly fearing a recurrence of his attack during the night, he had recourse to our Blessed Lady, saying : “ If thou art the Mother of Mercy, give me now experience of thy mercy.” Then he was rapt in spirit and saw our Lady coming to him, bearing her bleeding Son in her arms, as though He had just been crucified ; and she said to him : “ Thou wilt never suffer for love of Him as much as He has suffered for love of thee.” So saying, she disappeared ; and the Brother found himself entirely cured. Another Friar, renowned for holiness and learning, a Lector in the University of Cambridge, related that a good man used often to see a globe of light coming down from heaven on the heads of the Brethren, when they were devoutly singing our Lady’s Antiphon after Compline.

Nor were these marvels confined to the early days of the Order, to that wonderful thirteenth century, when everything is so full of the poetry of spiritualism that we are surprised at no manifestation of the visible communion of the Church on earth with angels and the blessed. Marchese, writing in A.D. 1668, a most unimaginative period of history, says, “ These graces have been conferred by the Blessed Virgin on the Friar-Preachers even in our own day ; as has been witnessed by many, and specially by the Venerable Maria Raggi and by Sister Paula of St. Teresa ” (A.D. 1583-1657). This indeed was often the case with Sister Paula, who said that our Lady came and stood in the midst of the Friars, blessing them and looking at them lovingly. Sister Carità of Brescia (A.D. 1515) sometimes saw the Blessed Virgin with her robe embroidered with flowers, denoting the devout affections with which the Sisters sang the antiphon, and often accom-

panied by angels, who joined in the harmony, mingling their voices with those of the Religious.

Louis of Gandullo (A.D. 1610), that sweetest of visionaries, was one to whom the singing of the *Salve* was oftentimes the opening of heaven. He saw our Lady with the Child Jesus in her arms, both of them looking at the Brethren with eyes so loving and beautiful that no tongue could describe their tenderness and sweetness ; and the impression left on his heart was so wonderful that for a long time afterwards he kept exclaiming, " Oh, what eyes, what eyes !" Being in his cell, he set himself to consider what he had seen, praying our Lord that He would tell him with what eyes it was that our Lady had cast such sweet glances ; and he was answered, " They are the eyes of mercy." Thenceforth his devotion to that gracious and loving Lady greatly increased. Sister Paula of St. Thomas (A.D. 1572-1634), was accustomed to use the *Salve* as her constant prayer in all necessities, whether of body or soul, and used to say that she had never asked anything by its means without receiving it. Some women of her acquaintance being in the habit of using superstitious rhymes and spells, she would say to them : " If you must have magic, say the *Salve Regina* ; there is none like it."

Blessed Benvenuta had many revelations of the presence of the Divine Mother during the procession. She once saw her standing in the Prior's place, then following the Hebdomadarian, inclining to each of the Brethren as he was sprinkled. Another time she saw her standing between the two acolytes who held the candles, singing with them, her face being turned towards the Religious, and at the words *Jesum benedictum fructum ventris, etc.*, she made the sign of the cross over them with the Holy Child Himself, Whom she extended towards them. On

another occasion, being the festival of St. Dominic, she saw the holy Patriarch in company with St. Peter Martyr, joining in the procession and taking the place of Father Gerard, the Prior, who happened to be absent. He followed the Hebdomadarian, as he sprinkled the Friars, embraced them one by one and then returned to his place.

Which of us but must often have been reminded during that sprinkling of one of the scenes in the life of Blessed Henry Suso, who, whilst suffering from his long and voluntary mortifications, during that time when he never drank to quench the burning thirst which perpetually tormented him, used to open his mouth to catch a few drops of the holy water sprinkled over the Brethren during the *Salve*?

The *Salve* procession was a devotion so dear to Jerome Baptist Lanuza that, when elevated to the Episcopate, he felt lost without it, and introduced it first of all every Saturday in his Cathedral of Barbastro, always assisting in person and entoning it himself; but even this did not satisfy him, and he afterwards had it practised every evening according to the Dominican rite in his own private chapel, where he sang it with much devotion and delight. It was during the procession of the *Salve* on the vigil of the festival of St. Dominic that an angel appeared to Father John Peter Cortese, celebrated for his boundless almsdeeds, and who had given away in charity all the money which was to have provided for the expenses of the feast, putting a purse into his hands with thirty times the sum he had disposed of. Father John Peter was indeed one who deserved such remuneration. He was often getting into difficulties from his open-hearted charity and never used any other argument to help himself out of them than

the favourite words of St. Lewis Bertrand: "What goes out there," pointing to the alms-box, "comes in here," pointing to the church door.

This enumeration of the legends of the *Salve* would be incomplete without that pretty story of Sister Helen of Hungary (A.D. 1270), whose supernatural gifts were all of the most graceful kind. Wherever she went, some kind of beauty seemed to follow; flowers sprang beneath her feet, nay, out of the very stigmata which she had mysteriously received. But chiefly she was continually surrounded and accompanied by a heavenly light; and once, when she had been detained chopping wood in the kitchen, it was so late when she entered the choir that Compline was over and the *Salve* had begun. There were no candles, however, for the community was too poor to burn them except at Mass; but, as Blessed Helen came in, two burning lights appeared on the altar, and continued to shine all the time the *Salve* was being sung. This miracle was often repeated. Sometimes the candles that were on the altar unlighted are said to have kindled of their own accord on her appearance, and to have burnt for some time, without, however, being consumed.

Antony Creus, the favourite novice of St. Lewis Bertrand, whose first words, before he could speak plainly, were to tell his mother that he intended to be a Saint, manifested, not only his saintly, but his Dominican inclinations, when he was not yet four years old; for, having seen the procession in the Dominican church, it became his favourite childish diversion to arrange his companions in choirs and perform the ceremony according to the rites of the Order, triumphantly asking them, after giving them a good sprinkling, if they did not think he would make a very good Friar-Preacher.



It was remarked that he fell into his agony during the singing of the *Salve* in his convent.

The Martyrs of Sandomir (A.D. 1260), the earlier part of whose beautiful story will find its place in a subsequent chapter, were slain by the Tartars during the *Salve* procession ; and the legend goes on to tell that one of their number, having taken fright and concealed himself in the belfry, perceived that the mangled bodies of his companions, whose souls were now singing Alleluias in heaven, continued, though dead, to chant that sweet melody of the *Salve* ; whereupon he regained courage and went to join them in the courts of paradise. “ Thus they died,” says the old historian, “ like heavenly swans, whose death-songs were the sweet praises of their Mother Mary ; and doubtless her virgin hands very lovingly crowned them with the garland of immortality.”

From this circumstance arose the custom, universal throughout the Order, of singing the *Salve* round the deathbed of its members, that so all may pass into eternity with the echo of the familiar words whereby they have daily, throughout life, commended their last hour to their heavenly Mother : *Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui nobis post hoc exilium ostende, O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.*

We may mention, in concluding this part of our subject, that that signal friend and lover of our Order, St. Philip Neri, had a great devotion to the *Salve* procession and used frequently to come himself and send his penitents to the Church of the Minerva to assist at it.

The deliverance from the extraordinary sufferings endured by the Order in the primitive days of its institution, to commemorate which the *Salve* procession was ordered to be perpetually continued, was not the only instance of

similar protection in answer to prayer. When Innocent IV. published his Bull, A.D. 1244, by which all the privileges of the Order were taken away and the Brethren exposed to the persecution of their enemies, the Friars had recourse to Mary as their only hope. Every day the Penitential Psalms and the Litanies were recited; and whilst the Fathers were saying these prayers prostrate on the ground before the altar, a religious in Rome saw the Queen of Heaven kneeling before her Son, interceding for them, and saying, *Fili, exaudi eos*. Other visions of a similar kind were seen in Paris and at Palencia; and very shortly afterwards, on the death of Innocent IV., his successor Alexander IV. revoked the Bull and restored all the ancient rights and privileges of the Order, A.D. 1255. These benefits were felt to be so directly the gift of God through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, that it was ordained that henceforth in all necessities and persecutions the Litanies should be recited in a similar manner. Accordingly, in A.D. 1330, when the Dominican Order so nobly opposed the schismatic Emperor Lewis of Bavaria and the Antipope whom he supported, and was in consequence deprived of all its convents and possessions in Germany and Northern Italy, Father Barnabas of Vercelli, who was then General, ordered a repetition of the Litanies and Processions; and the same year the death of the Emperor, together with the imprisonment of the Antipope, put an end at once to the sufferings of the Order and the schism of the Church. These circumstances probably gave rise to the popular saying: "Beware of the Litanies of the Friar-Preachers!"

It is said that the custom of introducing the *Ave Maria* at the opening of sermons, which afterwards became universal in the Church, had its origin with our Holy

Father St. Dominic ; and some of our readers will doubtless remember the Saint's celebrated discourse in the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris on that text, suggested to him by our Lady herself. We are also told that, before preaching, it was always his custom to kneel and salute his heavenly Patroness with the words : *Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata* ; " Vouchsafe that I may praise thee, O sacred Virgin."

Of St. Thomas Aquinas it is recorded that he preached during an entire Lent on the words *Ave Maria* ; and the same cherished words are to be found in his own handwriting over and over again on the margin of an autograph copy of the *Summa contra Gentiles* recently discovered in Italy.

The little indulgenced Office of the Holy Name of Mary has often, though erroneously, been attributed to the pen of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, though it is really of earlier date. But it was a favourite devotion of his and has always been popular in the Order. The Versicle and Response, *Salve, Mater pietatis et totius Trinitatis nobile triclinium*, were added by Blessed Albert the Great (A.D. 1203-1280) ; and it is said that our Blessed Lady appeared to him and thanked him for the title of " resting-place of the whole Trinity," then conferred upon her for the first time.

The favours shown by Mary to the Brethren during Blessed Jordan's government have been alluded to in speaking of the *Salve* procession, of which he was the originator ; but it was not only at the *Salve* that she appeared among them ; her familiar presence sanctified their choirs and dormitories. On the feast of the Purification, as they were singing the Invitatory at Matins, *Ecce jam venit*, " Behold, the Lord cometh to His holy Temple," she was seen to descend with the Divine Infant in her

arms to the altar, where a throne was prepared for her by a countless host of Angels. There she remained during the whole of the Invitatory, until the *Gloria Patri*, when, taking her Son's little hand in hers, she blessed them with it and so disappeared. Moreover, she herself consoled the same holy General by the assurance that no member of the Order should remain for any length of time in mortal sin, but should either quickly repent or be expelled from its ranks ; " for," said she, " I will preserve this Order, which is so dear to me, for ever pure and unspotted."

St. Hyacinth (A.D. 1183-1257) was a special client of the Queen of Heaven, and received from her lips the consoling promise that whatsoever he asked through her intercession he should obtain. When the Tartars attacked the town of Kiev, where the Saint was residing, he prepared to take flight, bearing with him the ciborium containing the Most Holy Sacrament. As he passed out of the church he saluted as usual the large marble image of our Lady ; when, lo ! a voice came to him, saying : " Hyacinth, wilt thou leave me behind ?" Trusting to heavenly assistance, the Saint hesitated not to take the ponderous image upon his arm ; and thus, bearing his two precious burdens, he is recorded to have crossed the river Dnieper, walking on the waters.

It would be impossible to enter on the subject of the private devotions of the Saints to their heavenly Mother and Protectress ; for these would in themselves fill a volume. Yet we can scarcely help referring to some of them, in illustration of the peculiarly familiar intercourse existing between Mary and her children. Thus we read of an English Friar of the name of John, on whom some office was imposed which appeared to him both burdensome and perilous, that in his distress he earnestly

commended himself to our Blessed Lady, who appeared to him, saying: "Fear not, Brother, but do manfully and let thy heart be strengthened; and wait a little while, for the office which is such a burden to thee, will be for thy merit and thy crown." Jane of the Kings used every day to prostrate before the image of the Blessed Virgin and manifested her conscience to her as to her mother, "telling her all her little wants." Mary of Jesus Christ had a simple way of praying to the Blessed Virgin which never failed to obtain the favours she asked. "Dear Mother," she would say, "I want such or such a thing; please to give it me quickly; for I don't know any one else to ask but you." Blessed Margaret of Hungary never spoke of her except as "God's Mother and mine," or, "The Mother of God and my hope!" Leonora of Portas lost all power of speech during her last illness, so that she could not explain her sufferings or ask for anything she wanted; two words only could she pronounce, and they were *Mater Dei*, "Mother of God." The news arrived that the brother of one of the other Sisters was taken prisoner by the Moors, and the Sister who told her begged her to give some sign that she would pray for him; her only reply was, *Mater Dei*. No intelligence of his deliverance, however, reached them; and the poor religious, whose name was Frances of Sarmiento, would often sit weeping and disconsolate by Leonora's bedside. Still she repeated the same words, as if to comfort her; and at length, one day, grasping her hand and making a violent effort to speak, she succeeded in saying three times the words, "Already; *Mater Dei!*" The next day the news of his escape reached the convent. At length the last hour arrived, and still the same words were heard, but now in a glad and joyful tone. "*Mater Dei!*" she repeatedly exclaimed, pointing to one spot in

the room, and there indeed stood the Mother of God, who came to call her child away and put an end to her long sufferings. When Mary of the Cross was elected Prioress of the convent, she took the keys and laid them at the foot of our Lady's image, saying : " The care of the house is thine, my Mother ; I will be nothing but Sub-prioress."

We must not omit a story which is not without its moral for any who may chance to have too warm and exclusive an attachment to pet devotions of their own. Two Sisters of the Convent of Aveiro were one day disputing as to the relative importance of the festivals of the Nativity and the Assumption. The argument was getting warm between them, when they were confounded at seeing the image of the Blessed Virgin miraculously turn its back upon them as if in displeasure. They immediately fell on their knees to ask pardon for their fault, and learnt in future to carry on their pious disputes with somewhat less eagerness.

We will conclude with the consoling revelation made to Sister Paula of St. Teresa. When she was once praying for several of the Superiors of the Order, our Lady appeared to her, and, opening her robe, showed her their names written on her heart ; and on another occasion she showed the same Sister her own name engraved there in letters of gold.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

THERE is an Italian proverb which says, "Be a Dominican when you die," referring partly perhaps to the wonderfully happy deaths which seem to be among the special privileges of the Order, and partly to the great number of prayers for the faithful departed and in particular for its own members, which its constitutions prescribe. But, besides these obligations of our Rule, it is evident by the multitude of voluntary exercises undertaken by so many of our religious for the relief of the suffering souls in purgatory that a great tenderness in their regard formed a decided part of the spirit of their devotion. The pains of that mysterious region have been laid open to the eyes of many among them, not in the visions of fantastic imagination, as to the Italian poet, but to the eye of their faith and understanding.

The life of Sister Magdalen of St. Alexis presents us indeed with what we might call a circumstantial account of purgatory and its life of suffering, but she is by no means the only one to whom similar revelations were granted. Blessed Benvenuta, to whom heaven itself was so often opened, and on whom the bright light from God's throne streamed down even as it did on the simple shepherd child, Dominica, was led also to this other portion of the unseen world and conducted through it by St. Michael, the standard-bearer of the Lord. She was given to understand that by her prayers and merits she had already

delivered a great many from their sufferings ; after which her angelic guide added a word which must have brought a strange and mixed emotion to her soul. " Thou wiltst to die," he said, " but know that thou shalt not die yet, forasmuch as thy prayers, whilst yet on earth, are given for the comfort and release of these thy brethren." Life or death, however, with the Saints was ever desired only in reference to the glory of God ; and so, doubtless, Benvenuta was consoled for a longer exile, if she could help on more souls to the presence of their Lord.

Blessed Ambrose of Siena (A.D. 1220-1286) was not quite so indifferent, if we may judge from the beautiful story in the life of his penitent, Blessed Nera Tolomei, which exhibits to us at the same time the wonderful power given to the Saints for the relief of the faithful departed. Whilst he was in his agony, Nera saw in vision how Jesus Christ stood by him and addressed him in these words : " Dear friend, if thou desirest to remain on earth a little longer to labour for sinners, I will leave thee there and thou shalt gain many. But if thou desirest to depart, I will take thee to heaven, together with five thousand souls, whom for thy sake I will release from purgatory." And she heard how Blessed Ambrose answered in these terms : " My Lord and Master, I desire neither heaven nor earth, neither life nor death, but only to do Thy holy Will. Nevertheless, since Thou biddest me choose, I will freely avow that I would rather go hence now ; for the world is full of dangers, and one may easily lose one's soul and Thy friendship, even whilst labouring for the souls of others." Then she saw that our Lord let him have his wish and took him to Himself ; and the five thousand freed and purified souls formed his happy escort to heaven, where he was placed among the ranks of the Apostles,



forasmuch as when on earth he had not failed to do the office of an Apostle.

It is no uncommon thing to find mention of those who were accustomed to recite the Office of the Dead daily and even twice a day. Dominica of the Cross. (A.D. 1603-1628) was one to whom the dead were especially dear. Death, far from having any terrors to her, was the favourite subject of her thoughts ; the bell tolling for the dying or the dead was to her as the sweetest music ; and her earnest prayer for herself was ever for an early and a happy death. Hence, whilst still detained from the object of all her desires, she consoled herself with the perpetual thought and society of the dead, devoting herself to them as to the friends with whom she was most certain to find sympathy. " This devotion," says her biographer, " was in her something singular and quite out of the common order, and was sanctioned by miraculous testimonies of the divine approval." Just after the death of her father she felt a strong desire to learn the Office of the Dead by heart, that so she might be always interceding for his soul. Full of this thought, she tried if she could remember the first psalm, and, to her surprise, found herself able to recite the entire Office, which she had never tried to learn, and which was supernaturally impressed on her memory. Her guardian angel faithfully assisted and encouraged her in her devotions for the poor souls and constantly gave her warning of the death of certain persons who needed her prayers. One night, as she was tranquilly asleep, she was aroused from her slumbers and heard a sweet voice by her pillow, which said, " Dominica, the soul of one of the Sisters of your Order has just departed in the monastery of Arras ; arise and pray." Without a moment's hesitation she threw herself from her bed and

repeated five *Paters* and *Aves* and a *De profundis*, with her arms extended in the form of a cross. The next morning brought news of the Sister's death.

■ This devotion of hers taught her many divine secrets connected with the great mystery of death. One of her thoughts on the subject has great consolation in it, or may at least be suggestive of consolation to us when we greatly need it. It happened that one of her sisters in religion had recently lost her mother, and feeling very anxious as to the state of her soul, she gave herself to continual prayer on her behalf and urged Dominica to do the same. Dominica, seeing how much she suffered, tried in her own sweet way to calm and comfort her. "Do you feel a strong inspiration to pray for your mother's soul?" she asked. "Ah! dear Sister," was the reply, "it is a desire that gives me no rest, night or day. I know not what the state of that soul may be, which in life was dearer to me than any other; what would you have me do but pray?" "Be comforted, then," she replied; "that strong desire on your part is a powerful token of her salvation; it can only come from God, and He can only urge us to pray for those who are saved, not lost. We will, therefore, pray much for this soul in the firm faith that God wills its deliverance by our means." The event justified her words; for, three days afterwards, the soul of the person in question appeared to her in the night and thanked her for her prayers and intercessions.

Castiglio gives a beautiful story, which we will quote at length. There was in the convent of Genoa a Friar named Lanfranchino, a very simple and religious man, especially devout to the Passion of our Lord. He was accustomed therefore frequently, and especially when the Brethren were in the refectory, to take the crucifix from the altar and to

go with it through the church, sighing and weeping, and saying, "O my Lord, how could any one have dared to do this? How could they be so bold as to harm Thee thus?" And with these and the like words he would give vent to the feelings that filled his heart. At length the desire seized him to visit the Holy Land; and Blessed Jordan willingly gave him leave to go. A few days after his arrival in Jerusalem he died. When his death was known in Lombardy, the Blessed Father Robaldo of Milan, who was his dear friend, thought what he could do for the relief of his soul; and, knowing that now he could not help himself and was dependent on others, and that the friendship of the living who were in a state of grace was the best hope of the faithful departed, he determined to say a great number of Masses for him. The next day, therefore, he offered the Holy Sacrifice for him at the altar of our Lady; and, when he came to the memento for the dead, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him and showed him Lanfranchino safely lodged beneath her mantle. "Here is your friend," she said, "for whom you pray and offer sacrifice to God; therefore, when you have finished Mass, go to the Prior and tell him what you have seen." Robaldo, when he saw his friend in so safe and happy a place, remained greatly astonished and consoled, and for wonder could scarcely finish his Mass. But, thinking over it all afterwards, he came to the resolution to say nothing of what he had seen to any one, but to go on saying his Masses for Lanfranchino all the same. The next day, as he was again at the altar, the same vision was shown to him for the second time; and this time St. Dominic also appeared, and together with the Blessed Virgin sharply reproved Robaldo, reminding him that he had given him the habit with his own hands, and bidding

him under obedience not to delay to reveal the happy state of Lanfranchino's soul to the Prior. Robaldo no longer hesitated to obey, and declared all that he had seen, not only to the Prior, but to every one he knew, so that Lanfranchino was universally honoured as a Saint throughout Lombardy.

We read in the history of our Sisters of several who entirely devoted themselves to the relief of the poor souls, giving them all their prayers and good works. A Spanish lay-sister, Bernardine of the Cross, was one to whom the state of the suffering souls had a special interest. So powerful was her intercession on their behalf that many often appeared to her, begging her assistance. Once, when kneeling in choir, a great number surrounded her, importuning her for prayers. Her Sisters observed her weeping as if in great distress, and speaking as though to some invisible companions: "Leave me," she was heard to exclaim, "let me alone!" One of the religious rose from her place, and, going to her, begged to know what was the matter. "It is the souls in Purgatory," she answered, "who let me have no peace; they desire me to cause thirty Masses to be said for them, and I know not what to do." "Be comforted," replied the Sister, "I will see about that;" and, going to the Prioress, she represented the request made to Sister Bernardine; and, the Masses having been said, the latter was allowed to enjoy a little more peace.

In the beautiful collection of the Lives of the Sisters of Unterlinden a consoling story is related of a certain Sister Margaret, a religious of singular holiness, of whom we read that throughout her whole life she never knowingly permitted her thoughts to wander on useless things, as she told another in confidence, and that she was most severe

to herself in all things. Never, for the space of forty years, did she allow herself the rest of leaning back in her chair ; in winter she would not approach the fire ; and in summer she never would go into the open air to cool herself. It is not surprising to hear that the prayer of so holy and mortified a soul was most fervent and efficacious and that many were indebted to her for their speedy release from purgatory. On one occasion her brother, who had lately died, appeared to her all in flames, and told her that by a just judgment of God he was condemned to unceasing torments till the day of doom. Sister Margaret's heart was wrung with pity ; and she ceased not, day and night, to implore the Divine Mercy on his behalf. Our Lord had regard to the prayer of His handmaid, and for her sake shortened her brother's punishment ; so that in a few days the departed once more appeared to her, all resplendent and clad in garments of snowy whiteness, and thanked her exceedingly for her prayers, by means of which he had been released.

It is interesting to find among the instructions given by Sister Jane of Douay in her apparitions to her novice-pupil, Sister Magdalen of St. Alexis, the use of the Rosary mentioned as being of special efficacy for the relief of the souls in purgatory, probably on account of the ample indulgences with which it is enriched. One of the privileges granted to Blessed Lucy of Narni was the relief of all those for whom she prayed on her days of Communion, the offering of her Communions having also a special power for their comfort and deliverance.

The account left us in the life of Sister Magdalen Angelica has a naïveté and beauty of its own. She was always asking for Masses, making the Stations of the Cross, and saying rosaries for the Holy Souls ; and very often,

when she was going round the church making the Stations for them, they surrounded and followed her, as little chickens follow the hen ; and, gathering round her as she prayed, they seemed to wait for her prayers and catch them out of her mouth, gently disputing amongst themselves which should benefit by them. Sometimes they came back after their deliverance to thank her, tenderly embracing her as though she had been their mother.

Catharine of Herrera, whose labours were all on a large scale, was not content with giving her own prayers and good works to the holy souls, but zealously spread this devotion among others. She succeeded in getting a number of Masses and rosaries said for them every week ; and was herself the foundress of a chapel for the daily celebration of the Holy Sacrifice on their behalf.

Nor did our Holy Father St. Dominic fail to show in many ways how dear this devotion was to his heart. This is evident from the fact that one of his nightly disciplines was offered for the dead, and from the great number of prayers prescribed by his Constitutions to be recited for this intention. Of his favourite disciple and companion, Blessed Bertrand of Garriga, we are told that he was accustomed every day to celebrate Mass for the conversion of sinners ; and being asked by one Father Benedict, a prudent man, why he so rarely said Mass for the dead and so frequently for sinners, he replied : “ We are certain of the salvation of the faithful departed, whereas we on earth remain tossed about in many perils.” Then Father Benedict said : “ If there were two beggars, one with all his limbs sound, the other a cripple, which would you compassionate most ?” “ The one certainly who can do least for himself,” replied Father Bertrand. “ Then,” said Father Benedict, “ such certainly are the dead, who have

neither mouth to confess nor hands to work, but who ask our help ; whereas living sinners have mouths and hands wherewith to take care of themselves." Still Bertrand was not convinced ; but the following night a terrible vision of a departed soul appeared to him, and with a bundle of wood pressed and weighed upon him in a wonderful way, waking him up more than ten times and vexing and troubling him exceedingly. Next morning he called Benedict to him and related to him the vision of the night ; and then, going to the altar, religiously and with many tears he said Mass for the faithful departed ; and thenceforth the offering of the Holy Sacrifice for the dead became one of his favourite devotions.

Sister Virgilia d'Afflitto (A.D. 1612) had what may be called a gigantic devotion of her own for the souls in purgatory. It consisted of a Rosary in which, instead of *Paters*, she used to say on every large bead an entire Psalter, and, instead of *Aves*, on every small bead an Office of the Dead ; so that she recited altogether one hundred and fifty Offices of the Dead and fifteen Psalters. Besides this she was in the habit of offering for the relief of the suffering souls all that she did during certain hours of the day.

St. Catharine de Ricci learnt her lesson of charity for these souls in their own prison-house of torments, as did also Blessed Catharine of Raconigi, who was carried thither by her guardian angel when only five years old. From that time the impression which the terrible sight left on her soul was never effaced ; she gave her prayers, penances and sufferings on behalf of the holy souls and was the means of delivering many, amongst others a Sister of the Third Order, who appeared to her in glory five days after her decease to thank her, adding, however, with a deep sigh : " Sister, believe me, purgatory is very

different from what men think." Another soul, delivered by the prayers of Mary of Jesus, appeared in the form of a dove flying up to Heaven, having been detained in purgatory only three hours, but said : " They were as long as a thousand days ! " There is a story of Blessed Mary Mancini, a contemporary and friend of St. Catharine of Siena, being awakened by a low and plaintive voice. Looking around her she saw no man, but only the semblance of a pale, melancholy, flickering flame ; and knowing it to represent a suffering soul, she got up and offered herself to suffer in its place. God heard her prayer and sent her a sickness which wasted her as if by fire for five months ; and, at the end of that time, she knew that her offering had been accepted and that the soul for whom she had made it was happy and at rest. Nor was Blessed Mary by any means the only one of our Sisters who offered herself to suffer for the faithful departed. Most of our readers are probably familiar with the beautiful story in the life of our seraphic mother St. Catharine, from which we learn that, just before her father's death, she earnestly besought our Lord that he might be taken immediately to the beatific vision ; and, on being told that the divine justice required that he should for a short time be purified from the rust of sin in the flames of purgatory, she offered herself to endure punishment on his behalf. Her prayer was heard ; and, at the moment of the departure of his soul from the body, she was attacked by a grievous pain in the side, which never afterwards left her.

Agatha of the Cross once asked our Lord how it was that for so few prayers He granted such favours to the souls in purgatory. He replied that prayers offered to Him in memory of His sacred Passion were very pleasing to him and very efficacious for those for whom they were offered.



## PART III

### DOMINICAN DAILY LIFE

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#### CHAPTER I

##### EARLY RISING

THE first sound of the bell calling the religious to rise to prayer is the first voice of obedience ; and as such it was answered by the Saints whose examples we are considering with a promptitude which often merited to receive tokens of the divine approval. St. Rose perhaps enjoyed the most enviable of these privileges. At one time she suffered from sleeplessness and received orders from her confessor to take a sleeping draught and allow herself longer rest. It was not until morning that the draught began to take effect ; and then, in spite of the penitential character of her bed, the Saint slept so profoundly as often to exceed the prescribed number of hours. Her spirit of obedience took alarm, and she besought the Mother of God to come to her assistance. From that day our Lady deigned to take on herself the duty of calling her faithful servant. At the hour appointed by the Saint's confessor Mary would present herself, radiant with beauty, saying : " Rise, my daughter ; the hour of prayer is come." Then St. Rose would leave her bed and, prostrate on the ground, would exclaim with St. Elizabeth : " Whence is it to me

that the Mother of my Lord should come to visit me?" One morning, however, the Saint was more weary than usual ; and, though she answered the heavenly call and at once sat up, she involuntarily closed her eyes and fell asleep again. Our Lady returned, touched her with her immaculate hands (a thing she had never done before) and said in a graver tone than usual : " Sleep not, my daughter ; thou didst earnestly beg of me to call thee at the hour of prayer. Lo ! I come a second time. The hour is passed." Rose reopened her eyes and saw the Mother of God departing ; but she had not, as usual, the happiness of beholding her beautiful countenance ; whence she concluded, with deep contrition, that our Lady wished to punish her for her sloth.

Very frequent allusions may be found in the lives of our Sisters to the saying, popular amongst us, that she who comes first to choir gets the blessing of St. Dominic. Sister Francis of St. Dominic, who died while still a novice, but who in the short space of six months " fulfilled many years," never allowed any one to deprive her of this privilege by being beforehand with her. One morning, however, she could not find her shoes, a mischance which she attributed to the malice of the devil, who thus sought to delay her. The fervent novice, however, was not to be beaten so easily and ran down to choir without them. In the beautiful sketch of the life of Sister Antonia Howard (A.D. 1661), preserved in the archives of the community now settled at Carisbrooke in the Isle of Wight, it is mentioned that she was equally jealous of the honour of first entering the choir, especially on the feast of Pentecost, when it is believed the one who first enters receives from the Holy Ghost the grant of any petition he may offer. In some convents there is also a special eagerness to be

the first in choir, as Magdalen was at the Tomb, on Easter Sunday morning.

Sister Mary Casavanti (A.D. 1528-1598), when a very young religious, was cured of a disposition to sleepiness when the bell summoned her to rise to Matins by the following circumstance. On one occasion, when she felt herself more than usually tired, she was tempted to remain a little longer in bed, and had half resolved to stay where she was, when she heard a strange and unearthly voice, saying, "Yes, indeed; we will stay here together." Instantly recognising the presence of the tempter, she sprang from her bed and went down with the others to choir; nor, as we may well believe, did she soon forget the lesson of that night.

The General Chapter held at Paris A.D. 1241 enjoined that during the Office of the Blessed Virgin, recited on certain days and formerly almost daily in the dormitory, the Brethren should wear their shoes. Castiglio gives an explanation of this singular command which affords a lively picture of religious fervour in the first and golden age of the Order. "In those days," he says, "the Brethren slept side by side in a common dormitory. It was beautiful to see how, when the signal for rising was given at midnight, all sprang from their poor beds, and, standing beside them, began the Matins of the glorious Virgin. They did not seem well to have set their feet to the ground, before they began to sing the *Ave Maria*, with which that Office commences. Thus the custom of rising with the *Ave Maria* on their lips and of not moving from the spot till they had finished Matins was so punctually observed among them that many scrupled to delay for the moment required for putting on their shoes, which were the only things they used to take off on going to bed; and

so, for many years, the habit prevailed of saying Matins barefoot until it was ordered in the General Chapter of Paris, A.D. 1241, that they should put on their shoes before beginning Matins of our Lady.

With many of the religious of our Order the custom prevailed of watching either from Compline to Matins or from Matins to Prime. There is a beautiful story of Sister Elizabeth of Marini (A.D. 1524), that, having finished Matins in the choir with the other religious, on one occasion she spent the remainder of the night in spinning, and her work was, we are told, as acceptable to God as prayer, so that, in reward for her labour, a choir of angels came and entertained her as she spun by singing Matins to her over again. This custom of watching half the night was so universal that we read of one Brother who, feeling a little sleepy after Matins, had ventured to go to bed, that he had hardly begun to doze before he was awakened by his guardian angel, who roused him with a sound blow, saying, "Up, Peter, this is the time for prayer, not for sleep." Of one of our Sisters it is recorded that she was accustomed to rise at every sound of the clock and say five *Paters* and *Aves* with her arms outstretched in the form of a cross. To such as these the rising at the first sound of the bell was hardly a mortification.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DIVINE OFFICE

IF we would learn the spirit of St. Dominic with regard to our duties in choir, St. Dominic himself must be our teacher ; and on this point he has given us his instructions in a manner which none can fail to understand. It may be questioned whether even in his devouring zeal for souls he was more fervent than in his care for the due and devout recital of the Divine Office. After his long watchings in the church it was he who rang the bell for Matins and called the Brethren from their slumbers ; “ and so zealous was he,” says Blessed Jordan, “ for the fulfilment of this first duty of religious that he was accustomed to go about from one to another, telling them to sing with attention and devotion and in a loud voice.” The prostrations and inclinations directed by our Constitutions are for the most part as he left them ; in particular, we are told, he himself never passed before the altar without a profound inclination in acknowledgment of his own nothingness, and that it was with the same idea he introduced the inclination at the *Gloria Patri*. He was not one to spare himself, or to encourage others in doing so, whilst occupied in God’s service. Thus he was fond of singing as he walked, the *Ave Maris Stella* being his favourite hymn ; he seldom failed to sing Mass every morning ; and in the Canonical Hours his voice was always loudest, for he took special delight in the joyous and sonorous recitation of the Divine Office. In this matter he certainly may be said to have left his mantle to his

children, at least to some amongst them, in whom this spirit may be discerned in a remarkable degree.

St. Vincent Ferrer, like St. Dominic, always sang his Mass ; and a story is also told of one of our early American missionaries which exhibits the same disposition and the reward merited by it so beautifully that we give it at length, as related by Marchese in his *Life of Father Bernard Navarro* (A.D. 1616). He was appointed Vicar in the Philippine Islands at a time when the Order was possessed of many houses and churches in that Province but had very few religious with which to supply them, so that it often happened that one religious was all that could be spared to each house. Father Bernard was alone at the convent at Binalatongan, where, in spite of his solitude and his prodigious labours, he never interrupted the usual course of regular observance. He rose at midnight and recited Matins aloud in choir, though there was no one present but himself and some of the Indians attached to the service of the house. Now upon a certain night it happened that these Indians were astonished at perceiving that he was not alone in choir, but that another Father, of wonderful majesty and gravity, was there reciting the Divine Office with him, whose face shone with a splendour that dazzled them as they gazed. At first they supposed the stranger to be one of the other missionaries, though they knew not of any fresh arrival. They watched therefore to see if he went out of the choir with Father Bernard ; but he did not ; and, the mystery getting talked about, others came on the following night to see the strange religious and Bernard was pressed to reveal his name. He refused to satisfy their enquiries ; only to a dear and intimate friend he acknowledged that his companion in the choir was St. Dominic himself, who

came every night to show him this kindness and to assist him in singing the Divine Office. But one night, before Matins had begun, it happened that Bernard was called away some miles off to see a dying man and was kept so late that he saw to his regret he should not be able to recite Matins at the usual hour. Coming back, accompanied by his Indians and several other persons, they were surprised on approaching the church to see it lighted up ; for they knew that they had left it locked and in darkness. Unfastening the door, they entered with some feeling of curiosity, and their wonder increased when they beheld, not only that the choir was full of light, but that two religious of the Order, both of surpassing majesty and beauty, were reciting the Office there. One of them sat and the other stood alternately, in the manner prescribed by the Constitutions ; and they observed all the pauses, inflections and prostrations customary in our choirs. One of them the Indians recognised as St. Dominic by the star blazing on his forehead ; the other was known by Father Bernard to be his own particular patron, St. Vincent Ferrer. Whilst the Indians remained full of wonder and awe, Bernard advanced to the choir with a humble and joyful step ; and entering, he prostrated, as is customary with those who come late to Office. The holy Patriarch, having given him the usual signal to rise, beckoned him to sit next him, which he did, and they finished Matins together ; after which the two Saints disappeared. This sight was witnessed by many persons and often spoken of at the time. The exact manner of fulfilling the Divine Office observed by Father Bernard was not peculiar to himself or to his Province. Half a century earlier Father Gonzales Lucero (A.D. 1551) had to undertake the care of the Convent of Antichera in New

Spain under similar circumstances ; and he did so with equal fidelity to his Rule. " He was," says Marchese, " his own Superior and had to see to everything himself. Yet he observed so rigorous a manner of life that he kept the fasts and austerities of the Order to the letter. As to the Office he recited it aloud in choir, rising at midnight for Matins and Lauds, which he was not content with merely reciting, but also sang with no less sweetness than spirit the Canticle *Te Deum*, the Hymns, and the *Benedicite*. He was the architect of the convent, the confessor to all the district, and the preacher, not only in Antichera, but through all the surrounding country. In short, it is not to be told what he did and suffered in this solitary mission. Many hours he watched before the most Holy Sacrament, always, in imitation of his holy Patriarch, taking three disciplines every night and never sleeping save on the altar step. The Canonical Hours he always recited aloud, kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament. In fact his life was an exact imitation of St. Dominic's, a continual prayer and work for God's honour and the salvation of souls."

We should run the risk of tediousness were we to give every example of this fervour in the recital of the Office which is so peculiarly a Dominican characteristic. But some of the notices connected with the subject must not be omitted. How beautiful, for instance, is the picture left us of Sister Maria Ortiz of the Convent of Salamanca, a hundred years of age, yet never absent from the midnight Matins, at which she assisted leaning on her crutch ! It is pleasant, too, to know that our Lady is not indifferent to our manner of singing her praises ; for, when the Friars of Bologna were saying her Office in the dormitory one night, as it would seem, a little sleepily, she appeared



among them together with the virgin-martyrs, St. Agnes and St. Catharine, and encouraged them to sing with spirit, saying : *Fortiter, fortiter, viri fortes.*

Nor was this fervour evinced only in the spirit and animation of the singing but in the exactness of the pauses and prostrations. If any be tempted to consider these things of small importance, and perhaps to treat the scrupulous distinction between a profound and a middle inclination as a mere puerility of formalism, let them learn a lesson of wisdom from Sister Ippolita of Jesus. Going to the choir one night, whilst the other Sisters slept, she was surprised at hearing Matins sung by some unseen choristers with extraordinary precision and exactness. Summoning courage to inquire who they were, she received this answer : " We are your Sisters of this convent who have departed this life and are now in purgatory, satisfying God's justice for our carelessness in having so often recited Office whilst alive without regard to the proper pauses and inclinations, and for this reason we are condemned to return here every night and sing Matins as directed by our Rule." From that hour to the day of her death Ippolita never forgot this revelation, but was remarkable for her invariable fidelity to the minutest ceremony of the choir, which she likewise enforced upon her subjects.

In this matter Father John Baptist Lanuza, afterwards Bishop of Barbastro, was a severe disciplinarian. Overwhelmed with a multitude of occupations, studies and fatigues, he would never admit of any relaxation of his choir duties or accept leave of absence from the midnight Matins. So great was his love for the Office that nothing distressed him so much as the dispensations by which the Hours were sometimes altered as to time or said hurriedly

and without the proper pauses. He was wont to say that, no matter how cold or indelicate he might be, he found the remedy for everything in the Office ; and, if any of his religious consulted him on such subjects, he always gave as his answer : " Go to the choir and you will find your fervour." When he was made Bishop he still assisted at the Office in public as often as he could, and made a great point of its recitation with the prescribed ceremonies and inclinations. " I desire," he would say, " that ecclesiastics should make at least as much account of the ceremonies of the choir, which have to be performed in God's presence, as soldiers and courtiers do of those ceremonies they perform before their prince." He sang himself in the cathedral choir, and woe to the man who did not observe the prescribed pauses in his presence ; he corrected the delinquent on the spot and was accustomed to say that nothing could dispense a prelate from the duty of assisting in the choir and singing in it.

Sister Laurentia Lorini was distinguished for her love of the choir, in which she assisted with such joy and modesty of demeanour that it seemed to be her paradise. And well might it be called so to her ; for, whilst there, she was accustomed to see, not her Sisters only, but all their guardian angels, who were by their side in choir and assisted them in singing the praises of God. Once she saw the angel of one of her sister-novices, for she was not yet professed, with a sad and melancholy countenance, whilst all the others were glad and joyful. Laurentia was familiar with these blessed Spirits, who often appeared to her, reproving and consoling her ; and she therefore ventured to address him whom she saw with such a sorrowful expression, and ask him the cause of his sadness. " I am," he replied, " the guardian angel of this novice, your

Sister ; and I am sad because I see that she repents of her choice of this holy state. Even now her thoughts are all of the world and its follies, and she stands here in the choir weary and discontented. She does not heed me when I bid her rouse herself to the duties of the Office, for indeed it inspires her with nothing but weariness and disgust." Laurentia lived to make her own profession but died shortly afterwards. As she was lying on her deathbed she asked for the crown of flowers which she knew would be placed on her head after death ; and, as she held it in her hands, the angels, her constant friends and companions, surrounded her couch and sang a chorus which was heard, not only by herself, but by her confessor and the nuns. This was the reward of one to whom the choir had been a paradise.

The presence of the angels in our choirs is illustrated by what is told of Father Peter of Albenga, who, being in the church of the convent at Genoa, praying, saw a multitude of demons enter the cloister and choir, filling them with a horrible stench ; and then he saw a legion of angels come after them and drive them out. After this two other angels came with golden thuribles and incensed the whole church, filling it with an odour of unspeakable sweetness, which, they explained to him, was the prayer of the Brethren which they offered night and day as a sweet odour to God.

Among those who were most distinguished for their love of the choir we must reckon Blessed Jane of Portugal, who, when her last hour drew near, begged so earnestly to be suffered once more to assist at the Office with the others that her Sisters, unable to refuse her, carried her to the choir in their arms ; and, when she had to come away, her eyes filled with tears, for she knew that it was her last visit there, and she gazed with passionate tenderness on the

stalls and especially on the one where she had been accustomed to sit, saying : " Farewell, ye seats of angels, I shall never see you more ! "

We know that it was the favourite devotion of her namesake, Sister Jane of St. Catharine, also called Jane of Douay, to go round the choir on her knees and kiss the seats one by one ; such was her sense of the dignity of the Office recited there. Of Sister Magdalen Orsini, foundress of the convent of our Order on Monte Cavallo in Rome, it is said that her fervour in reciting Office always communicated a wonderful glow and brightness to her face. One day this was observed in so remarkable a degree that two of her most confidential Sisters begged her to tell them if there were any unusual cause for this joy. She seemed astonished at the question. " Is it possible," she asked, " that you did not hear the music of the angels ? They were singing with us all the time." " My children," she would sometimes say, " do you often enough thank God for letting us, who are creatures of clay and mire, join in the angels' Office ? He who enjoys the continual melody of the Seraphim does not disdain to listen to what we poor women can do for Him ! Ah ! if the world knew the delights He has gathered together for His Spouses, all would be religious."

Sister Carità Gambara (A.D. 1515) often saw our Lady among the Sisters in choir, sprinkling them with holy water and exhorting them to sing with a loud and sonorous voice. Brother Arnold of Rivo (A.D. 1502), son of an English knight in the service of the Queen of Portugal, was witness to the angels taking part in the Office, as is narrated in his Life. One night, when the Brethren were all singing Compline, the sound of the *tremola* was heard, that is, the instrument used to give warning of the approaching death

of a religious. All the Brethren left the choir and hastened to the infirmary, with the exception of Arnold, who was so absorbed that he did not hear the sound or notice the departure of the others, and remained behind, singing his Compline alone. He was not alone, however ; for, directly the Brethren had left the choir, a corresponding number of angels came and supplied their places, singing Compline with him according to the rite of the Order. When the others returned from the infirmary they were surprised to hear the chanting and to find Father Arnold singing the versicle *In manus tuas* with as much composure as if, as usual, the community were present. Questioning him why he had remained alone, they heard from him how the angels had supplied their places.

Sister Catharine of Seville (A.D. 1596) had a wonderful devotion to the Office and seldom said it without tears, which flowed with such sweetness and serenity that no one saw them save those who were very near her. On the days when she communicated, she never stirred from the choir till evening. When she grew old and infirm, her greatest affliction was the being unable to join the other Sisters at Matins, for which reason she begged to be given a cell near the choir that she might at least hear them chant. She used to say her Matins at the same time as the others sitting on her bed ; and, in order to be able to do this, she had requested another Sister always to bring her a light before going down to choir. One night the Sister forgot to render her this charitable office, but the candle was brought by an unknown religious, whom Sister Catharine always believed to have been her beloved patroness, St. Catharine of Siena, to whom she bore a singular devotion. In the year 1596 on the festival of this Saint, which at that time appears to have been celebrated in Spain on the first

Sunday in May, being already confined to her cell by illness, Holy Communion was brought to her as usual. Later in the morning she was taken much worse and received Extreme Unction ; after which she asked for her Breviary and recited her Office up to the end of None. Then closing the book, she said to the infirmarian : " As to Vespers and Compline, we will say them in heaven ;" and in fact she died before the hour of Vespers.

Sometimes the choir chant was capable of producing a wonderful effect on the hearts of those seculars who heard it. Thus Guido Reggiolano, a Florentine student (A.D. 1394), happening to pass our Church of Santa Maria Novella whilst Lauds were being sung, caught a few words of the canticle *Benedicite*, which produced such an overpowering emotion in his soul that, obeying the call of God without delay, he went straight to the Prior and asked for the habit, in which he persevered, and died in the odour of sanctity.

When the fever of which St. Hyacinth died was at its height and nothing seemed to relieve his sufferings, he begged his Brethren to carry him to the choir. They remonstrated, telling him he was better in bed ; but he replied, " Let me praise the Lord as long as I have any life left," and insisted so earnestly that they yielded to his request. When he had been brought thither and laid down, he joined in the words that were being recited, repeating : *Laudabo Dominum in vita mea ; psallam Deo meo quamdiu fuero*. " Oh," he whispered, " how happy I should be if I could die singing !" And indeed he may almost be said to have done so, for he fell into his agony suddenly, just as the Brethren had finished None in the choir on the feast of the Assumption.

To return, however, to the instances of those celestial visits to our choirs of which we have already spoken.

Mary of St. Augustine, a Sister of the Convent of Seville, happening once to raise her eyes, saw two angels, one on either side of the choir, joining in the chant and regulating the time like cantors. It was in the nave of our great Church of the Minerva in Rome that the Venerable Maria Raggi saw how, during the singing of Compline, the Blessed Virgin, accompanied by a vast procession of the Saints of our Order, passed up the church, and the Saints bent low in token of homage to their Queen, whilst she went on to the choir, distributing gifts to all the religious and giving special signs of favour to the most devout. The life of Blessed Jordan is full of these beautiful incidents. On the night of the Circumcision it fell to his lot to read one of the lessons at Matins ; and, as he did so, another of the religious saw the Blessed Virgin, crowned with her imperial diadem, standing before the lectern, graciously looking at and listening to him ; and when he had finished reading, she received the book from his hands ; then, surrounded by a company of blessed spirits, she moved towards the altar, St. Dominic leading the way. When the Brethren came out of choir, he to whom this vision had been granted begged Jordan to tell him if he had enjoyed any particular sweetness whilst reading that lesson ; but the Saint only replied by a pleasant smile, for it was not his custom to speak of the divine favours. Such spectacles as this must surely have filled their beholders with no small reverence for the offices of the choir ; and accordingly, among the instructions given by Blessed Jane of St. Catharine to Sister Magdalen of St. Alexis, we are not surprised to find her inculcating a holy zeal and envy for the offices of Reader and Versicularian, forasmuch as any office in choir should be regarded as one of dignity and honour. The same Sister teaches us something with

respect to our outward manner in choir ; it was she whose customary mortification it was never to move her feet from the place where she stood from the time the Office commenced.

We may gather some idea of the dignity of the Divine Office, not only from the instances above given of those heavenly Spirits who are present at it, but also by the circumstances so constantly recurring in the lives of our Saints of those religious who, ignorant of every kind of human learning, were yet taught in a wonderful manner to recite the Office and even to understand it. This was the case with Blessed Margaret of Castello (A.D. 1320), the blind beggar-girl, who never learnt to read certainly, for her blindness was from her birth ; yet Jesus condescended to hear her prayer and with His own sacred lips to teach her all the Canonical Hours. Blessed Catharine of Raconigi likewise learnt the Office from our Lord Himself, but was never able to read any other book than the Breviary ; nor did she ever use any other vocal prayers than those which it contained.

Whilst treating of this particular mark of our Lord's favour to his Saints, of which there are numerous instances, we naturally call to mind a beautiful story in the life of our seraphic Mother, St. Catharine. After her Divine Spouse had taught her to read the Office, He was Himself accustomed to recite it with her, walking up and down her room ; and, when she repeated the *Gloria Patri*, her sense of His dear and sacred presence was so vivid that she would alter the words and say, *Gloria Patri, et Tibi, et Spiritui Sancto*. We read also of His showing a like condescension to Maria Lanzi, with whom He often recited the Office.

Magdalen Orsini, one of the most perfect models of a religious Superior whom the Order has ever produced, used



to take such delight in the Divine Office as to sing with both sides of the choir in order to give vent to her enthusiastic devotion and to animate her children to sing with spirit. "Oh!" she would exclaim, "if the world did but know what we possess in being able to be with our Master night and day to sing His praises, we should soon have to turn palaces and towns into churches and monasteries."

When we come to consider the particular and favourite devotions which these holy souls drew from the Office, we are struck by seeing how they found in it food for each one's devotion and how, like the heavenly manna, it took every kind of flavour to those who daily gathered it. Ippolita of Jesus was remarkable beyond all her other virtues for her confidence in God. We are not, therefore, surprised to read of the delight which the recital of the Psalm *Qui habitat* gave her every night at Compline; and specially did she rejoice when she recited or listened to the words, "He shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven" (Ps. xc. 1). And once, when she was singing these words with more than usual devotion, she saw herself carried before her Divine Spouse and placed within the wound of His Sacred Heart. Again, whilst singing the 61st Psalm, at the verse, "He is my God and my Saviour; He is my protector, I shall be moved no more," she saw the heavens open, and Christ our Advocate pleading before His Eternal Father on our behalf; and, though the sight lasted but an instant, it inspired her with such a feeling of security and confidence that the thought remained ever in her heart and the words on her lips, "He is my protector, I shall be moved no more."

The power of consolation in these chance passages of the Divine Office is again illustrated by that story of the novice who, being sorely tempted and troubled in his mind, went

to look for Blessed Jordan, that he might get some comfort and advice. He found him reciting the Office of the Dead and, not liking to disturb him, sat down and began reciting it with him, intending to wait until he should have finished and then to declare his troubles. But when they came to the verse *Credo videre bona Domini in terra viventium*, Jordan, to whom the young man's thoughts were perfectly manifest, said the words with so peculiar an emphasis and such a sweet tone of encouragement that they carried consolation to the heart of his hearer ; and when the Office was over, he said : " Father, I came to seek counsel and comfort ; but it is no longer needed. When you said those words : ' I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living,' and again, ' Let thy heart take courage and wait thou for the Lord ' (Ps. xxvi. 13, 14), it was as if you had seen my grief and taken it all away."

It is natural, however, whilst we read of the delight which the Saints took in their Office, for us to remind ourselves that they evidently for the most part understood every word and relished its spiritual meaning in a very different way from what we can do, among whom Latin is a dead language. But, though this was generally the case, it was not universally so. Blessed Jordan was once asked by one of his Brethren, a lay-brother, to whom even his *Pater Nosters* were unintelligible, whether, when he said them, not knowing their meaning, they were of any value. " Tell me," replied Jordan, " if you wore a ruby ring on your finger without knowing its exact value, would the stone be less precious on that account ? Even so the prayers given us by God are not less precious because we do not understand the language in which they are written." But, though this was one kind of answer to the difficulty, another may be found in the use made of

vocal prayer in earlier times. It was evidently made a help to mental prayer in a way quite irrespective of the meaning, as we may see, if we consider some of the vocal, devotions to which holy souls bound themselves, and which, sometimes including thousands of *Pater Nosters*, etc., during the night, were but the vehicle of contemplative prayer. And, though in very many cases it is quite evident that the language of the Breviary was perfectly understood, it is certain that even then the thoughts were not always engaged on it in its literal sense. Magdalen Orsini used to meditate on the different parts of the Passion during the Hours of the Divine Office, and on the graces of Mary during the Office of our Lady, and to give this as a rule to her spiritual children ; and of Blessed Margaret of Hungary we read that, when she sang Matins, " her heart was burning with fervour as she occupied herself now with the sense of the words she recited, now with devout affections towards the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, now with the memory of the Saint of the day ; whilst at every inclination she multiplied interior acts of humility, adoration and self-annihilation ;" in which passage we see that the attention to the sense of the words was only one of her means of devotion, and that the inclinations and ceremonies were quite as efficient a help to prayer as the words she recited.

Indeed, it would be impossible to exaggerate the love and reverence shown by the Saints for the least of these ceremonies. To them every prostration or genuflection had its own spiritual significance and was like an act of faith and self-abnegation. Of one Sister we read that it was her custom, as she made the profound inclination at the first *Gloria* of every Hour, to offer her life for the faith of Christ ; and on one occasion she realised this idea so

vividly as almost to faint, feeling as it were the sword-stroke on her neck. Many of the private devotions of the religious of the Order were full of these outward actions ; thus we read of St. Dominic that he would spend hours of the night in making repeated genuflections as he prayed, and of others to whom so many prostrations were as common a method of prayer as the *Aves* of the Rosary. Of this kind of devotion Blessed Henry Suso has left us a model in his written meditations on the Passion.

If so great use were made of external ceremonies in private, much more were those commanded by the Rule held dear and sacred. Antoinette of St. Thomas was accustomed to consider the rubrics and constitutions regarding the Divine Office as addressed to herself as a special obedience, and was never known to neglect the least of them ; and, not to repeat what might be said of all the Saints, we will content ourselves with adding St. Peter Martyr's (A.D. 1252) admirable words on the ceremonies of the Rule : " The exterior ceremonies of religion," he said, " are like mortar, which is indeed formed of many insignificant particles of powder, each one fine as dust and sand ; nevertheless, put them together, and they unite the stones of the edifice and so form the foundation and stability of the entire building."

Thus much has been said of the Divine Office in general ; but it is time to give some of the associations connected with particular parts. It has been said that Compline was with our earlier Fathers the favourite Hour, perhaps from the many graces vouchsafed at the singing of the *Salve*, of which we have already spoken. Next to Compline we find most notices of their love for Matins and the Martyrology. Some of the stories connected with the latter are specially beautiful. In the year 1260 the Polish

dominions suffered greatly from the incursions of savage and heathen bands of Tartars, encouraged and led on by those inveterate enemies of the Polish nation, the Russians. They had laid siege to the town of Sandomir, where there was a convent of the Order, governed by a holy Prior of the name of Sadoc. One night at the conclusion of Lauds a certain novice, according to the rubric of the Order, went to the lectern to sing the Martyrology, and saw in the place of the book where he should read the following words in letters of gold : " At Sandomir the passion of forty-nine new martyrs." The novice was greatly astonished. Nevertheless " with the simplicity of a dove and the voice of a swan " he sang out to the Brethren the message of their approaching martyrdom. The Prior, amazed and perplexed, desired the novice to bring him the book, and the miraculously inscribed words were distinctly visible to the whole community. Then Blessed Sadoc, filled with the Spirit of God, counted his Brethren and, finding they were exactly forty-nine, he exclaimed : " These words are for us ; doubtless it is the Tartars who will open for us the gates of heaven, and that to-morrow." The remainder of the night was spent in prayer, in making their confessions and in calm preparation for the Communion which they knew was to be their last. It was not until evening, however, that they were called to receive their crown, during the singing of the *Salve* after Compline, as related in a previous chapter.

The Martyrology of Christmas Eve and that of the Vigil of the Annunciation are always sung in Dominican convents with special solemnity ; and all the religious prostrate on the ground, " to give thanks to our Redeemer both with heart and body when the beginning of our salvation and redemption is announced." It is not

surprising, therefore, to find that the Martyrology on these days was regarded by our Saints with special devotion, of which we find numerous notices in their lives. Sister Scholastica of Valentia was seized with her death-illness on Christmas Eve during the singing of the *Pretiosa*, which immediately follows the Martyrology. She was Hebdomadaria and, having prostrated devoutly with the others at the words announcing the Birth of Christ, she recited the words which follow in the Office, *Pretiosa in conspectu Domini*. And the choir answered as usual, *Mors Sanctorum ejus*, at which words she fell senseless to the ground. She never spoke again, though she did not expire till the feast of Holy Innocents. Her life had been one to merit that her death should be counted precious in the sight of the Lord as that of His Saints. We read of Sister Magdalen of Portugal that she took a singular delight in the customary ceremony accompanying the Christmas Martyrology and always seemed to hear whilst prostrate the angels announcing the birth of Christ at Bethlehem. Another religious of the Order, making the prostration on this occasion with singular devotion, was assisted to rise by our Holy Father St. Dominic himself.

When the Martyrology announced the approach of any of our Lady's feasts, Blessed Margaret of Hungary is said to have trembled with joy. These were her own days; for, indeed, her love for the Blessed Virgin was more tender than that of a child for its mother.

The death of Blessed Jane of Portugal was announced to the Prioress of her convent during the singing of the Martyrology; for she saw the Princess clad in shining garments standing at the lectern, singing in a voice so sweet and touching that it moved her even to tears. And, when she had finished the names of all the Saints to be

commemorated the following day, a clear voice was heard to proceed from the High Altar, saying : " Death shall soon come." Then the Prioress saw that the book on the lectern was closed and that Sister Jane was carried away.

Isabella of the Column was Chantress in the Convent of Seville, an office to which she was chosen on account of the angelic sweetness of her voice. Her Sisters affirmed that during Holy Week whenever she commenced a psalm or hymn, or intoned the responses, rays of light were seen streaming from her face.

Father Samuel of Casacalenda used always to spend an hour in mental prayer to prepare himself for Matins ; and for this reason he every evening begged his guardian angel to awake him at the proper time ; nor did his faithful friend ever neglect this kind office. One night Samuel, whose duty it was to prepare the Lessons and Martyrology to be sung by the novices at Matins, was roused by an audible voice, which said : " Samuel, go to the choir and find the proper Lessons, for those you have put out are wrong." Samuel did not immediately stir, not feeling sure what his mistake had been, upon which his angelic visitor spoke again, telling him the error he had made and where he would find the proper places ; and when he came to the choir, he found it exactly as had been told him.

For the comfort of those whom sickness prevents from rising for Matins, we have the example of Sister Prudentia, who, grieving at her compulsory absence, was consoled by her patron, St. Peter, who assured her that the Office said in bed, in the midst of bodily suffering, was even more acceptable to God when offered in union with His divine will than when said in choir. There are indeed a great many comforts for the sick in our Chronicles ; for, if we find one story like that of Arnold in which the angels are

represented as singing in choir whilst the religious were in the infirmary, there are twenty which tell us of their singing the Office to the sick who could not join the community.

Nor was it only the sick who were thus consoled in their absence from the Church. Those whose active duties called them to work often received encouragement and tokens of divine favour in the midst of their occupations. Thus Mary Gonzalez, a lay-sister, very devout to the Blessed Sacrament, was obliged to be absent from High Mass on the feast of St. Dominic, being busily employed in the kitchen. This was a great disappointment to her ; and, as she cooked the dinner, she shed a few tears, but tears so sweet and resigned that God looked down on them with pleasure. " My dear Lord," she said simply, " since I cannot go to visit Thee, be pleased to come and visit me ;" and as she so prayed that vision was granted her which spiritual writers call imaginative ; the walls of the house between her and the choir seemed to be broken down and she was able to see the Blessed Sacrament as though she had been actually present in church.

Mary of Jesus took great delight, in imitation of our Holy Father St. Dominic, in ringing the bell for Matins, and as she did so would exclaim : " Let us call all creatures to help us in praising God." The description left us of her manner of fulfilling her choir duties is of singular beauty. Although Superior and often engaged with seculars, she never allowed any occupation to detain her from the choir at Office time. She joined in the psalmody with a lively sense of the majesty of God and the presence of assisting angels, which was very perceptible when her voice was heard above those of the other Sisters or when she read the lessons at Matins, for then the sweetness



which filled her heart found its expression in her voice and replenished her Sisters with consolation. She used to exhort the Chantresses to perform their duty with fervour, saying they ought to be like Seraphim, setting the other Sisters on fire with divine love and animating their zeal ; and she used also to call the novices the Seraphim of the choir, because they stood nearest the Blessed Sacrament, and so, as she was accustomed to tell them, ought to be the most fervent.

It was in choir whilst singing Matins, and at the words, *Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo*, " The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever," that Blessed Lucy of Narni was observed to turn pale, as if fainting. Her Sisters went to support her, but she only said it was nothing and tried to conceal her hands. She had in that brief moment received the sacred Stigmata.

Blessed James Salomonio (A.D. 1235-1314) was a celebrated Cantor. He had great skill in the Divine Office and the Church chant, and not only used to exercise it himself but also to do his best to make his Brethren equally fervent, rousing them when distracted, and constantly reminding them that this was an office they would have to fulfil in the next world as well as in this, and so it behoved them to acquit themselves of it in a becoming manner.

The practice of singing the Antiphon *O Lumen* in honour of our Holy Father St. Dominic after Compline is not absolutely universal, the rubric only enjoining that some Antiphon of a Saint of the Order or of some other Saint should then be sung. In the Convent of Bologna it was customary to sing the *O spem miram*, going processionally to the tomb of the Holy Patriarch ; and it was on one such occasion, during the general decadence of the Order at the time immediately succeeding the Great

Plague of A.D. 1347, that the Brethren, having entoned the versicle, "Fulfil, O Father, what thou hast said," etc., were horror-struck to hear a voice proceed from the tomb, saying: "I am not your Father, neither are you my children." This terrific warning produced a reformation in the community, which had fallen into great laxity.

We find mention of the *O Lumen* in the life of one of our Sisters of Spain, with whom it was a favourite devotion. She saw after Compline that the church was filled with a marvellous light; she did not immediately perceive that it was supernatural but went to see if there were no fire. Then a voice declared to her that what she saw was nothing earthly: "This is the light which you salute when you say, *O Lumen Ecclesiæ*."

The limited space at our disposal prevents our quoting further examples of the divine favours granted to religious of the Order during the Divine Office on certain special festivals. We must content ourselves with mentioning the Office of Tierce on Whit-Sunday, to which there is an allusion in the life of Sister Gertrude of the Monastery of Unterlinden. When the Hymn *Veni Creator* was being sung, this holy religious heard a great noise and beheld a divine fire descend from heaven on the entire company of Sisters singing the praises of God. It filled the whole choir, shedding such splendour on the community that they seemed to be all in flames; and a ray of divine light seemed to play round each one of them till the hymn was ended. The Sister to whom this vision was vouchsafed, understood it to mean that the Holy Spirit, Who is a consuming fire, by His blessed presence purified the Sisters from all the filth of sin and rendered their hearts clean vessels, inflaming them vehemently with His divine love.

This Sister Gertrude held the office of Chantress for

many years, and acquitted herself of its duties with great fervour and diligence. She endeavoured always to be the first in coming to choir ; she never spared her voice in singing ; and she exerted herself to the utmost that the praises of God might be sung by the Sisters unanimously, solemnly and in a loud tone of voice, as the festival or the season might require. To this fervour she was possibly moved by a terrible vision which was once shown her of a young Sister who had lately died in the monastery, and who, having been gifted with a magnificent voice, had like herself held the office of Chantress. This Sister, by a just judgment of God, was condemned to be most cruelly scourged in the choir, that holy place wherein she had sinned ; and it was revealed to Sister Gertrude that she was suffering this and other terrible torments because she had frequently neglected to employ in the ordinary singing of the Divine Office the beautiful voice with which she had been gifted, sparing it too much ; and also because, in singing, she had sometimes sought human applause more than the glory of God, and had been slow in coming to choir and often in a hurry to leave it.

We will conclude this chapter with the example of St. Lewis Bertrand, of whom we are told that, when prevented from reciting the Office in choir with the community, he was most punctual in saying it in private ; and during his whole life, whatever the nature of his occupations, he never changed the hour of Office, but always recited it faithfully at the exact time. On taking his Breviary to recite the Office he was accustomed to say the following devout verse :

“ Rex Christe clementissime,  
Tu corda nostra posside,  
Ut tibi laudes debitas  
Reddamus omni tempore.”

Which may be thus translated :

“ O Christ, our King, most meek and kind,  
Do Thou possess our inmost mind,  
That we may render Thee our praise  
Through every moment of our days.”

Before each hour of the Office he used to say an Antiphon of the Passion, thus placing before his mind some mystery of our Lord's sufferings to contemplate whilst reciting the Psalms.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CHAPTER OF FAULTS

WHEN our Holy Father St. Dominic was leading the devil through all the different offices of the convent, compelling him to tell his snares and devices against the souls of the Brethren, it is said that the evil one showed an extreme aversion to entering the chapter room, and, being asked the cause, replied: "Because what I gain elsewhere I lose in this place, by the humble confession which the Brethren here make of their faults."

An anecdote occurs in the life of St. Agnes of Montepulciano (A.D. 1317) which similarly illustrates the hatred shown by Satan for this important exercise of religious discipline, and its value as an instrument against his temptations. As she prayed one night in the dormitory, she saw the evil spirit wandering through the corridor like a lion seeking his prey. St. Agnes immediately caused the community to be roused, and held a chapter of faults; after which she dismissed them to their beds again, bidding them fear nothing, for that the devil could now do them no harm.

The light in which subjects are intended to regard the accusation of themselves to their religious superiors in chapter, is taught us by the revelation made to Sister Louisa of Barcelona (A.D. 1591), who saw the person of the Prioress change into that of Jesus Christ Himself as the Sisters presented themselves before her. As to the comportment demanded of us in chapter, there are several

instances worthy of our notice and imitation. Sister Magdalen Orsini, for instance, accused herself of her faults at the visitation of her convent with so much humility that her children were moved to tears. The Provincial, to humble her, gave her in the presence of all a severe reproof and desired them to take the black veil off her head in sign of ignominy and disgrace. When she rose from her knees after this severe treatment, her face was observed to be unusually joyful, and two words escaped her lips ; they were, *Benedictus Deus !*

The well-known story of St. Peter Martyr is another instance of silence and humility under unjust accusation. He was publicly reprov'd in chapter for scandalous conduct of which he was wholly innocent, and condemned to severe imprisonment ; but he endured it all without a murmur. Nevertheless, after his disgrace had continued some time, he began to feel it hard and complained, not to man indeed, but to God. Kneeling before the crucifix, he asked with many tears that our Lord would vindicate his reputation, for indeed his burden was heavier than he could bear. Then the lips of the crucifix moved and he heard these words in a clear deep voice : " And I, Peter, what did I do ? " words which, recalling his Master's silent endurance of false accusations and unjust punishment, so moved his heart that, far from seeking justification, he rejoiced and gloried in his conformity with his Lord.

Our Chronicles contain many stories of a similar description, as, for instance, that which occurs in the interesting Life of Father Raymund Rocca (A.D. 1583-1655), Novice-Master in the Convent of Naples. On occasion of some public ceremony, in which Raymund had instructed the novices how to conduct themselves, the Prior believed him to be in error on some point of the Rule, and, in full

chapter, in the presence of his novices, gave him a reproof of unusual severity, telling him he was both ignorant of the ceremonies of the Order and negligent of Rule. As he made an offering of this mortification to God, having retired to his own cell, the room was suddenly filled with light, and our Lord appeared to him as on the day of His resurrection. "Raymund," He said, "rejoice greatly, for indeed thou seest that I care for thy soul by sending thee these tribulations." Then, pointing to the wound of His Heart, "There," He added, "is the paradise for the sorrowful; be of good heart, therefore, for thy home is ready for thee there." Raymund was himself a pupil and novice of the celebrated John Leonard of Lettere (A.D. 1569-1621), one of the most famous confessors and Novice-Masters the Order has ever produced. Death did not sever the strict tie of friendship that subsisted between them; and very often Raymund, whose sanctification was brought about through continual mortifications, was consoled in his troubles by the appearance of his friend. His novices remarked that when holding chapter or spiritual conference in the noviceship he always avoided sitting in the large chair generally used by the one who presided; and once in particular, whilst he was speaking, they observed him turning to the empty chair as though some one were sitting there. One of the novices afterwards pressed him for an explanation, and he replied: "Know, my son, that Father John Leonard, whose soul is now in glory, takes such special care of this noviceship that he often comes to preside at our chapters and spiritual conferences, even as he did to-day, and as Father Mark of Marcanise [A.D. 1542-1616] does in the convent which he formerly governed. It is for him, therefore, that I leave vacant the chair which he occupied this morning."

In the oft-quoted Chronicle of the Monastery of Unterlinden it is related that a young Sister was one day accused and penanced in chapter. Feeling somewhat sad on this account, she withdrew into the choir as soon as chapter was over, and prostrated herself in prayer. Whilst there she fell into a gentle slumber and beheld coming towards her a friend of hers who had recently died and who held in her hand a lighted candle and some linen thread. Addressing the young Sister, she bade her look up and behold. The latter, lifting up her eyes, saw how the thread, being set on fire, dissolved into ashes ; and thus the departed Sister went on until all the thread was consumed. Then again her friend spoke, saying : " Thus before the face of the fire and of correction in chapter is every fault and transgression blotted out and consumed in our Lord's eyes, just as thread, when set on fire, is at once reduced to nothing. Therefore be not again sad when thou art accused and punished in chapter." At these words the young Sister awoke and distinctly saw the retreating form of her deceased friend, whom she vainly endeavoured to overtake.

Sister Petronilla Vela (A.D. 1589-1622) presents us with an example of the way in which a chapter penance should be accepted and performed. She was the noviceship door-keeper and was accused of stealing some trifling ornaments from the noviceship altar. A chapter was held for the express purpose of punishing the supposed offence ; and Petronilla was ordered to go round on her knees, kissing the feet of all the Sisters and asking pardon for her fault. She was a little perplexed ; humility obliged her to accept the penance, whilst her entire innocence rendered it difficult to use the words prescribed without a violation of truth. Nevertheless she did not hesitate, but went from one to



another, saying with unfeigned self-abasement : “ Pardon Sister, the scandal I have given, for I am indeed a sinner.” After her innocence was discovered, one of her confidential friends pressed her to say whether or not she had felt any repugnance or rebellion of nature at the moment of her public humiliation. “ I daresay I should if I had thought about it,” she replied, “ but I was occupied with the one idea of doing what the Prioress desired me to do, and it did not occur to me to think whether it were just or unjust.”

Sister Sigismunda of Sicily was accused in chapter of a grievous fault of which she was wholly innocent ; and, praying in great affliction of mind before the crucifix, she asked our Lord whether she were not bound to justify herself for fear of scandal. Then her Divine Spouse replied by the lips of the holy image in a clear voice, saying three times the words, *Audi et tace*, “ Hear and be silent ;” by which she knew that silence under calumny gave more glory to God than any removal of supposed scandal by a vindication of one’s character.

There are a few passages in the life of Blessed Jordan illustrative of his manner of addressing his religious in chapter. He never reproved them in severe terms ; indeed his words were so sweet that, as the Brethren said, it was a marvel that they hit so hard. He generally spoke in a kind of parable. Once having had considerable trouble with one or two refractory members of the community, the Friars were saluted with the following address : “ My children, it sometimes happens that shepherds find themselves set over a flock wherein goats are mingled with the sheep ; and, if there be only three goats and more than five hundred sheep, I would have you know that the three goats give more trouble than all the rest. For the sheep

will go where they are led at a sign ; but, as for the goats, nothing will manage them." Another time he said to them, " I had two enemies and one is dead ; I bid you wish me joy." The Friars looked at one another in astonishment. " It was of my two eyes that I spoke," said Jordan ; " the sight of one is quite gone, blessed be God ! and, if you smile, pray tell me what greater enemy can a man have, and a religious man in particular, than the two eyes, by which he more often offends God than he is able to give Him glory."

The chapter room was often the favourite place whither the Saints retired at night, that their prayers, watchings and disciplines might escape observation. Thus we are told, amongst others, of Blessed Martin Porres (A.D. 1639), that he had no other resting-place than the floor of the chapter room ; and it was there that he was seen in ecstasy, raised high in the air to embrace the feet of the great crucifix.

Blessed Albert the Great has a saying which may be aptly quoted in concluding our present subject, that " a man ought to esteem that day lost in which he has not been well humbled and mortified ; because one who loves Christ truly and ardently values nothing but contempt and suffering ; and, if left without them, believes himself to have done nothing and to have made no progress."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE REFECTORY

**F**AITHFUL to his principle of bringing body and soul alike into subjection to Christ, our holy Father St. Dominic from the outset attached immense importance to those exterior means which are so powerful in religious education. His children were to sacrifice all comfort and all human ties for the work of God ; they were to endure poverty, humiliation and detachment of heart in their most painful forms ; but one thing they were not to sacrifice, and that was the character of religious and the habits of regular observance. Whilst they begged their bread and lived on alms, the first thing on which those alms were expended was the rude and imperfect conversion of their poor dwellings into a religious shape. In their deep and living humility they acknowledged that they were powerless to retain the religious spirit, made up as it is of prayer and recollection and continual self-restraint without certain external helps. Every part of the Dominican Rule and Constitutions reveals this principle. The religious man was ever to be surrounded by an atmosphere redolent of sanctity ; he was to reflect a light of holiness cast on him by the very walls of his dwelling. His refectory was as unlike as possible to a dining-room ; it was as much a room to pray in as to eat in. There, ranged in a single row behind the simple wooden tables that stood on either hand, sat the same white-robed figures beside whom he stood in the choir and with an air scarcely less modest and devout. At the top was the Prior's seat ; there were

neither pictures nor ornaments on the walls, only a large crucifix above that seat, to which all were to bow on entering ; for even in hours of relaxation the religious man was to be mindful of the sufferings of his Lord. There was no talking or jesting as in the feasting of the world, for the refectory was a place of inviolable silence ; but from a little pulpit one of the Brethren read aloud, that, as the Rule of St. Augustine enjoins, whilst the body was refreshed, the soul also might have its proper food.

How often must we feel in reading the earlier devotional writers that many of their most charming passages could only have been inspired within the walls of a convent ! Thomas à Kempis had certainly caught the spirit of the following sentences nowhere but in a religious refectory : “ He that readeth words of holy wisdom to his brother, offereth choice wine to the lips of Jesus. He that at table giveth up to his brother the better portion, feedeth Jesus with the honey of charity. He that during refection readeth to his brethren correctly and distinctly, serveth up a heavenly cup to the guests of Jesus ; but, if he readeth ill, he taketh away the relish of the food ; and, if he stammereth, he staineth the cloth which covereth the table of Jesus. He that goeth to the common refectory with his brethren to hear spiritual reading, eateth and drinketh with Jesus and His disciples ; and, if he lay up in his heart the word of God which he heareth, he reposeth with St. John during supper on the breast of Jesus.”\*

Every part of a Dominican convent is as full of holy memories and associations to its inmates as are the streets of Rome to an ecclesiastical antiquary ; and of no portion of the building is this more true than of the refectory. Its

\* *Garden of Roses*, ch. xvii.

arrangement, as still in use, dates from the days of St. Dominic ; and the necessity of a regular and properly appointed room in which the religious might take their meals was one of the points on which with his usual sagacity he insisted in all his foundations. Thus we find him, immediately on his first visit to the infant community of St. James at Paris, " setting in order a proper house, with refectory and cloister ;" and the same thing is recorded of him at Bologna. The refectory in the latter place and that of the Convent of St. Sixtus at Rome were, each of them, twice during the lifetime of the holy Founder the scene of a miraculous interposition of divine Providence, wherein the brethren were served by the hands of angels. We must content ourselves here with relating one only of these incidents, *viz.*, the second, which happened at St. Sixtus and which is thus recorded in the old Chronicles : " When the Friars were still living near the Church of St. Sixtus and were about one hundred in number, on a certain day the blessed Dominic commanded Brother John of Calabria and Brother Albert of Rome to go into the city to beg alms. They did so without success from the morning even till the third hour of the day. Therefore they returned to the convent ; and they were already hard by the Church of St. Anastasia, when they were met by a certain woman who had a great devotion to the Order ; and, seeing they had nothing with them, she gave them a loaf. ' For I would not,' she said, ' that you should go back quite empty-handed.' As they went on a little further, they met a man who asked them very importunately for charity. Then they said one to another : ' What can we do with only one loaf ? Let us give it to him for the love of God !' So they gave him the loaf and immediately lost sight of him. Now when they were come

to the convent, the blessed Father, to whom the Holy Spirit had meanwhile revealed all that had passed, came out to meet them, saying to them with a joyful air : ' Children, have you nothing ? ' They replied : ' No, Father ; ' and they told him all that had happened, and how they had given the loaf to the poor man. Then said he, ' It was an angel of the Lord ; the Lord will know how to provide for his own. Let us go and pray. ' Thereupon he entered the church and, having come out again after a little space, he bade the Brethren call the community to the refectory. They replied, saying : ' But, Holy Father, how is it you would have us call them, seeing that there is nothing to give them to eat ? ' And they purposely delayed obeying the order which they had received. Therefore the blessed Father caused Brother Roger, the cellarer, to be summoned and commanded him to assemble the Brethren to dinner, for the Lord would provide for their wants. Then they prepared the tables and placed the cups, and, at a given signal, all the community entered the refectory. The blessed Father gave the blessing ; and, every one being seated, Brother Henry the Roman began to read. Meanwhile the blessed Dominic was praying, his hands being joined together on the table ; and lo ! suddenly, even as he had promised them by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, two beautiful young men, ministers of the divine Providence, appeared in the midst of the refectory, carrying loaves in two white cloths, which hung from their shoulders before and behind. They distributed the bread, beginning at the lower rows, one at the right hand and the other at the left, placing before each Brother one whole loaf of comely shape. Then, when they were come to the blessed Dominic and had in like manner placed an entire loaf before him, they

bowed their heads and disappeared, without any one knowing, even to this day, whence they came or whither they went.

“And the blessed Dominic said to his brethren : ‘ My Brethren, eat the bread which the Lord has sent you.’ Then he told the servers to pour out wine. But they replied : ‘ Holy Father, there is none.’ Then the blessed Dominic, full of the spirit of prophecy, said to them : ‘ Go to the vessel, and pour out to the Brethren the wine which the Lord has sent them.’ They went and found indeed that the vessel was filled up to the brim with excellent wine, which they hastened to bring. And Dominic said : ‘ Drink, my Brethren, of the wine which the Lord has sent you.’ They ate, therefore, and drank as much as they desired, both that day, and the next, and the day after that. But, after the meal of the third day, he caused them to give what remained of the bread and wine to the poor. . . . And the blessed Father made a beautiful discourse to his Brethren, warning them never to distrust the Divine goodness even in time of greatest want.” This miracle is daily commemorated in our refectories by the servers beginning to serve at the lower tables and so going up to the Superior’s table in imitation of the angels, a custom which has been made a law of the Order. Those who are familiar with the life of our Holy Father will remember his miracles of multiplication of food ; and similar instances are of frequent occurrence throughout our Chronicles.

Many of our Sisters took special delight in serving the community at table as an exercise of humility and self-abasement. Blessed Emilia Bicchieri, the foundress of St. Margaret’s Convent at Vercelli, often served her religious children in the refectory, and took great pleasure in

washing the plates and dishes with the novices and the lay-sisters. One anecdote in her life in connection with the rule which forbids us to drink out of meals without permission, deserves to be inserted. Blessed Emilia generally refused this permission to her subjects, exhorting them to offer up this trifling mortification for the souls in purgatory in union with the thirst of Jesus on the cross. "Give those drops of water into the hands of your guardian angel," she would say, "that with them he may quench the flames of purgatory." One hot day it happened that Sister Cecilia Margaret, having been refused in this way, felt great annoyance and discontent; nevertheless she made a generous effort to overcome these feelings and to offer her mortification according to the intentions of her Superior. A little while afterwards she died, and appeared with a joyful and glorious aspect to Emilia, saying: "Mother, do you remember the glass of water which you denied me, and which I felt it so hard to give up? On the third day after my death my angel came with it in his hand and in reward of my obedience quenched with it the flames which tormented me." Another allusion to this rule occurs in the life of Father Raymund Rocca, who was Novice-Master in one of the convents in Naples, and always prayed much for the souls of his novices after their death. One of them once appeared to him, telling him that he was suffering cruelly in the flames of purgatory for self-indulgence in too eagerly desiring cooling drinks and for disobedience in drinking out of meals without permission.

Some of our Sisters have chosen the office of server from other motives besides those of humility. Of one it is recorded that, being asked by her Prioress why she liked it so much, she replied that she never prayed so well as when she was serving her Sisters, and that she found time to



make many ejaculations in the intervals of her occupation. Blessed Margaret of Hungary is praised for her manner of serving at table, "with the same tranquillity of soul," says Castiglio, "as if she had been praying before the Blessed Sacrament."

We have the ideal of a holy and religious refectorian in the lay-brother Reginald of St. Mary (A.D. 1574). It is said that his holiness was such that the bread and fruit which passed through his hands acquired a peculiarly delicious flavour. Perhaps this arose from the charity with which he discharged his office ; for he was accustomed to serve each one of his Brethren with equal reverence and solicitude, considering in each the person of his holy Patriarch, St. Dominic. If such was his conduct towards the religious, his tenderness to the poor was not less graceful ; for in them he saw no other than our Lord Himself ; and we are told that he used to collect whatever the Brethren left at table and give it away "with much courtesy and cleanliness" to the poor who begged at the convent door, taking pains to warm it up for them, or, in case of fruit, to keep it in a cool place.

Blessed Alvarez of Cordova (A.D. 1420) was accustomed in like manner to give away the scraps he had collected at table. Once the Prior met him with his scapular filled with crusts, and asked him what he was carrying. "Roses," he replied, wishing to conceal his charity ; and the Prior, opening his scapular, found it was even as he had said, though the event occurred in the depth of winter.

We find a notice of the reading in the refectory in the life of St. Thomas Aquinas. It is related of him that, when as a young religious at Paris he was reading at table, he was told by the official corrector to pronounce a

word in a way evidently incorrect. The Saint obeyed ; and when he was afterwards asked how he could have consented to so obvious a blunder, he replied : “ It matters little whether a syllable be long or short ; but it matters much to practise humility and obedience.”

It was the hearing some passages from the Book of Proverbs read at table that turned the heart of Blessed Henry Suso, as he himself relates, to the burning love of the Eternal Wisdom, for which he was ever afterwards distinguished. The same Saint used lovingly to invite our Lord to come to the refectory with him, and would picture the Divine Guest of pure souls as seated opposite to him at table, and would look at Him very tenderly and often bow towards Him. At each course that was set before him he used to lift up the plate towards his heavenly Master, saying : “ O my Lord, bless what is before us, and eat with Thy servant.” Again, before he drank, he would raise his cup and ask Jesus to drink of it first. At table he used to drink five times, taking his draughts in spirit from the wounds of his dear Lord. If the food were distasteful to him, he would dip it into the wounded Heart of his Beloved, in firm trust that it could then no longer hurt him. He had many other devout practices at meals, which are related in his Life, and which were so pleasing to the Divine Majesty that God once sent a pious person to him from a distance to be taught all his ways. If sometimes he began eating or drinking too eagerly, the presence of the Divine Guest would make him ashamed, and he would give himself a penance for it. During the Christmas season he always deprived himself of a portion of the fruit served at table, offering it in spirit to our Blessed Lady, and praying her to give it to her Divine Child, for Whose sake he went without it.

One day, when the Venerable Maria Raggi was in prayer, her angel guardian spoke to her in an audible voice, bidding her always eat with great modesty, especially when alone, because Jesus Christ and the Saints of the Order were then attentively and earnestly watching every movement she made. This same watchful look of our Lord fixed on us at meals has been revealed to several others in the Order.

The conduct of Blessed Jane of Orvieto (A.D. 1264-1306) when at table is particularly recorded. She often forgot to eat ; she was so indifferent to food as not to know what she took. In fact, she entirely lost the sense of taste, and, whilst at meals, her heart was wholly absorbed in prayer. Magdalen de Redon went to table only to mortify herself ; and, being compelled by her confessor to give him an account of her conduct in this particular, she acknowledged that she had been able to perform no less than nine acts of mortification in eating an egg ! The Venerable Bartholomew of the Martyrs, when Archbishop of Braga, always divided his scanty meal into two portions, of which he sent one to the poor.

If once we were to allow ourselves to enter on the subject of the mortifications practised by our Saints in the refectory, we might fill volumes and perhaps only present our readers with examples beyond their imitation. When we read of those who never ate more than once in the day, who mingled their food with bitter herbs or with ashes, or gave the greater part of it away to the poor, not to speak of the extraordinary and miraculous fasts practised by many, we must of course understand these things to have been sanctioned by obedience, though this is not always mentioned in the narrative. The voluntary endurance of prolonged thirst in honour of that endured by Jesus on

the cross is a penitential practice recorded of many of our Saints, and in particular of Blessed Henry Suso.

We have already spoken of the presence of angels in our refectories ; in the *Vitæ Fratrum* we have an instance of the presence of their Queen. A certain Cistercian monk, happening once to dine with the Friar-Preachers at Pisa, was observed to eat little or nothing during the meal. One of the Friars afterwards spoke to him on the subject, and received for answer : " Never in my whole life have I had so good a dinner as to-day, for I have never had such a server to wait upon me. Indeed, what Order can boast of having such a server as you ? For this day I clearly beheld the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Lady, waiting upon the Brethren and presenting the dishes to them. And by this sight I was so refreshed in spirit that, as you saw, I was unable to take any bodily refecton."

One notice of the *Miserere* which we recite after dinner occurs in the life of a certain Prioress (A.D. 1235) who, having been attacked by a malady which deprived her of the use of her limbs, earnestly begged the Provincial to absolve her from her office. At the entreaty of the community, however, by whom she was greatly beloved, he obliged her to continue in charge. One day, therefore, when according to her custom she had caused herself to be carried to choir whilst the others were at dinner, she poured out her soul in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, beseeching our Lord either to call her to Himself or to move the Provincial to absolve her from her office, or to restore her health, that she might discharge its duties and no longer be a burden to the community. It pleased God to grant her third petition ; and she suddenly felt herself perfectly cured. Hearing the voices of the community who were coming to the choir after dinner, chanting the

*Miserere* as usual, she hastened out to meet them. They were so astonished at the sight that some took her for a ghost and ran away ; but, when they were really satisfied of her identity, the Chantress intoned the *Te Deum*, and they all went together to the choir to render thanks for so great and unlooked-for a miracle.

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## CHAPTER V

### THE HABIT

EVERY reader of the life of St. Dominic will recollect how Blessed Reginald of Orléans fell dangerously ill immediately after presenting himself as a postulant. The Blessed Dominic, we are told, grieving at the thought of losing a child ere as yet he had scarcely enjoyed him, turned himself to the Divine mercy, earnestly imploring God to prolong so precious a life, if it were but for a short time. And, even whilst he yet prayed, the Blessed Virgin appeared to Reginald and anointed his eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, reins and feet with her virginal hand. Then she showed him the scapular of the Friar-Preachers, saying to him, "Behold the habit of thy Order," and so disappeared from his eyes, leaving him completely cured. A few days later he received the habit from the hands of St. Dominic according to the form which had been shown him. "From that time," says Bernard Guidonis, "the Blessed Dominic and the other Brethren laid aside the use of the surplice, and took in its place as a distinctive portion of the habit the white scapular, retaining the black mantle which they wore over their white tunics as Canons Regular ;" though in announcing the change to the Friars our Holy Father did not reveal its cause until after the death of Reginald, which took place in A.D. 1220, within less than two years of his miraculous recovery. Thenceforth the white scapular became the distinctive garb of the Friar-Preachers, and the words which accompany the ceremony of giving it mark at once its origin and the

reverence with which it is regarded : " Receive the holy scapular of our Order, the most distinguished part of our Dominican habit, the maternal pledge from Heaven of the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary towards us, under whose wings thou shalt find a shadow from the heat and a bulwark and defence in death from all dangers both of body and soul." Hence Stephen de Salagnac calls our Lady *Ordinis Vestiaria*, or, as it would be translated in conventual phraseology, "the Habit-Mistress of the Order." "Blessed are those," exclaims Theodoric of Apoldia, "who are found worthy to wear this habit, the symbol of grace unspeakable, woven by the hands of the true valiant woman for the members of her household ! Let us ever cherish with veneration this royal and virginal garment and never soil its spotless whiteness." From the fact of the scapular being our Lady's gift to her children, the custom prevails in the Order of always invoking her on assuming it in the morning with the verse: *Monstra te esse Matrem, etc.*

Blessed Reginald was not the only one who received the habit from heaven. Blessed Lucy of Narni, whilst yet a mere child, was clothed with it in vision by the hands of St. Dominic, and was bidden to wear it even until death. Dominica of Paradiso was also clothed by our Holy Father's hands, and appeared openly in the habit so given, to the astonishment of the authorities of the Order, who questioned her right to wear it, and were not quite prepared to admit the validity of the ceremony. When Prudentia Rasconi was only seven years old, our Lady appeared to her and showed her the habit, saying, in the very words she had before used to Blessed Reginald : " This is the habit of thy Order, which thou must wear, if thou wouldst please my Son and me." From that hour every day seemed to her a year till she could enter the holy Order to

which the voice of Mary had called her. After she had done so and was lying in her last sickness, she was grieved because she could not say the Rosary kneeling, as was her custom. Then the Blessed Virgin again appeared to her, and condescended to come clothed in the Dominican habit, comforting her by the assurance that the Rosary was as pleasing to her when said by the sick in bed as when said in a kneeling posture, because what was wanting in exterior reverence was compensated for by the patient endurance of pain and discomfort.

A pretty story occurs in the early Chronicles of the Order about a certain Cistercian Abbot in Germany, Eberhard by name, to whom there appeared in the night a heavenly vision, and who heard a voice saying to him : " To-morrow I will send thee some of My horses ; fail not to shoe them well." The next day John the Teutonic, the fourth General of the Order, and his companion came to the gates clad in their white habits and black mantles. Their garments were poor and torn, and they carried nothing in their hands save a book and a stick. " Who are you ?" said the Abbot ; " whence do you come, and what is the meaning of your habit, and of the book and stick that you bear ?" And they answered : " We are Friar-Preachers ; we carry a stick to show that our preaching rests on the cross of Jesus Christ, which is indeed that staff of which David speaks when he says : ' Thy rod and Thy staff, they have comforted me.' We also carry the book of the Gospels, in which the preachers of God's Word should be fully instructed. And as to our habit of two colours, your Reverence will remember how the Prophet Zacharias (vi. 3, 6, 7) beheld four chariots, to the last of which were harnessed ' grised horses and strong ones,' which represented apostolic men,



who should be sent forth to preach the Gospel amongst many people. We are those grisled horses ; and the two colours of our habit signify, the white the purity of our doctrine and the black the austerity of our life."

When Eberhard heard this explanation, he cast himself at the feet of the speaker, saying : " You, then, are those horses of whose coming our Lord warned me last night in a dream, bidding me take good care of you." Then he washed their feet and gave them new shoes, for theirs were worn out in the course of their long journeys, and furnished them abundantly with every necessary, remaining ever after a great friend and protector of the Order.

With regard to the reverence due to the religious habit Castiglio remarks that our Lady took away the Canon's dress from St. Dominic because something of worldly honour attached to it, and she wished that he and his children should rather wear poor and humble apparel ; and " these garments," he says, " the emblems of purity and humility, are of such honour in God's sight that men should pay them reverence even by exterior marks of respect."

The scapular has been enriched by Pope John XXII. with an indulgence of five years and five quarantines, which may be gained by devoutly kissing it.

It is related in the life of Vincenza of Bologna, a lay-sister, that she was once sent out to beg alms in the streets of that city, and chanced to meet the Emperor, who was then residing there together with Pope Clement VII. ; and such was the veneration in which the religious habit was held in those days, that we are told the Emperor called her to him, and, getting off his horse, respectfully kissed her scapular and gave her

a considerable alms, with which in memory of the honour shown the habit the community purchased a silver crown for the Madonna.

Castiglio tells a story showing that this reverence for the outward garb of religion was a lesson sometimes taught in a supernatural manner. There was, he says, a certain Canon of Salamanca, Master Nicholas, who, going to the Dominican Convent to assist at the Divine Office, was unable to return home in consequence of a violent storm of rain. The Sub-Prior offered him his mantle, a rough, coarse thing well adapted to such weather, and Nicholas willingly accepted it, while his companions jested at his appearance, and the Sub-Prior bade them bear witness that he had received the Friar's habit. When he reached home, the jokes and ridicule did not cease; the mantle was exhibited to all the students as a kind of strange curiosity, and many a witty saying passed at the expense of the Friar-Preachers and their unsightly habit. But in the night Nicholas was attacked by a fever which soon brought him to the brink of the grave. Earnestly commending himself to God, he heard a voice saying to him: "Know that I will have, not only My servants, but even their habit, held in honour. Repent, therefore, of thy folly; for therefore is this sickness come upon thee." So, when it was day, he sent for the Friars and told them what had happened, conjuring them to let him henceforth wear the habit in good earnest and be admitted to their company, as indeed he soon after was.

It is recorded in the life of St. Hyacinth that, when he walked on the River Dnieper, bearing the Most Holy Sacrament and the statue of our Lady, as mentioned in a previous chapter, he spread his mantle on the waters

to serve as a boat for his companions, who safely crossed the stream upon it ; and the Saint is said to have worked a similar miracle on behalf of those who accompanied him on another occasion also. Better known and thoroughly authenticated is a story in the life of St. Raymond Pennafort. He had accompanied King James of Aragon on his expedition to Majorca ; but, being unable to check the disorders of the Court, he gave the monarch notice that, if the evils of which he complained were not redressed, he must immediately return to Spain. The king treated his threat very lightly, and gave orders that no vessel should take him on board ; but Raymond cast his mantle on the sea, and, fastening one end of it to his staff to serve as a sail, he calmly knelt upon the other, and thus safely accomplished a voyage of upwards of a hundred miles in six hours, both his departure from Majorca and his arrival at Barcelona being witnessed by multitudes. On landing the Saint gathered up his mantle, which was perfectly dry, and quietly went his way to his convent as if nothing extraordinary had occurred.

Great stress is laid in our Constitution on the wearing of woollen material next the skin ; and this, which does not seem much of a mortification to us, is doubtless felt to be very penitential in the burning climates of the South. Yet many of the great prelates of the Order continued to observe their Rule in this as in all other particulars to the day of their death, and St. Pius V. never laid aside his woollen shirt even when Pope. We read in the life of Blessed Martin Porres of his zeal in this matter. Meeting one day with one of the Fathers who was wearing a linen shirt, he stopped him, and asked why he was not in the infirmary. " Because I

am not ill," was the reply. "But, dear Father," pursued Martin, "if you are not ill, how comes it that you wear linen?" The Friar blushed, and stammered out that he had nothing else to wear. Martin immediately went to the Prior and begged permission to go out and collect alms in order to purchase woollen shirts for the community. He obtained the permission to do as he pleased; and the quest was so successful that in a few days' time no more linen was worn in the convent.

As for St. Dominic's own habit, it was more austere even than what he prescribed for others; it consisted of a single tunic, old, patched, often torn and cut by the devotion of those who sought to carry away relics from his person; and instead of a shirt he wore night and day a coarse hair-cloth.

The veil of our Sisters has before now been given away in charity, as in the case of Dominica of Paradiso, who, having nothing else to give, bestowed this alms on a poor beggar. She presently repented of what she had done, fearing it was irreligious and unbecoming to appear unveiled; but her fears were soon removed, for our Lord, Who had received the alms in person of the poor man, came to her with a loving countenance, and threw over her another veil, bidding her keep it in exchange for the one she had given Him.

How many among our Sisters have worn an espousal ring given them from heaven! And to some this ring has been visible and tangible, as in the case of Blessed Stephana, and not merely mystic like that given to St. Catharine. The rosary which hangs by our side, another heavenly gift to the Order, serves also continually to remind us that we are indeed the children of Mary.

We may fittingly insert here an anecdote from the life

of Blessed James of Mevagna (A.D. 1220-1301). He was a great lover of poverty ; and one day his mother, perceiving his patched and threadbare habit, gave him some money as an alms to buy clothes. Now it happened that the holy man at that time greatly desired a crucifix for his cell ; so he obtained permission from his Prior to use his mother's donation to procure one. When next she saw him, she expressed her disappointment at finding him still in so ragged a condition ; but he gently answered her in the words of St. Paul : " I have put on our Lord Jesus Christ " (*Rom. xiii. 14*).

The sequel to this story is full of comfort for doubting, anxious souls. We are told that Blessed James was once praying before this crucifix in an hour of great anguish of spirit, when his soul was filled with fears and doubts as to his eternal salvation. Suddenly, as he prayed, a copious stream of blood broke forth from the side of the sacred figure and bedewed his whole person, and from its lips there came the joyful words : " James, let this Blood be to thee a pledge of thy salvation."

To conclude this chapter, we will quote the description of the outward appearance of a true Dominican, as given by the Venerable Julia Cicarelli of Camerino (A.D. 1532-1621) : " The custody of the eyes shows the attention we ought to pay to our own defects ; the head inclined signifies submission of will ; the arms crossed the desire of suffering for God ; kneeling the remembrance of our falls and weaknesses ; woollen garments the patience and meekness of the lamb ; the white habit purity of heart ; the black mantle death to the world ; the hair cut off the retrenchment of worldly thoughts ; the shoes made of the skins of dead beasts the remembrance of death. When the interior is conformable to the exterior, then ' this is indeed the house of God.' "

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DORMITORY

**I**T is impossible to walk through a Dominican convent without being reminded at every turn of the history and the Saints of the Order ; and this remark especially applies to the dormitory. Some few of these holy memories we will now set before our readers ; and the first, as is fitting, shall be of the maternal love of the Blessed Virgin for the Brethren even as they slept.

In the life of our Holy Father we read : “ One night Dominic, having remained in the church to pray, left it at the hour of midnight, and entered the corridor where were the Brethren’s cells. When he had finished what he came to do, he again began to pray at one end of the dormitory, and, looking by chance towards the other end, he saw three ladies coming along, of whom the one in the middle appeared the most beautiful and venerable. One of her companions carried a magnificent vessel of water, and the other an asperges brush, which she presented to her mistress, who sprinkled the Brethren and made over them the sign of the cross. But, when she had come to one of the Friars, she passed him over without blessing him ; and Dominic, having observed who this one was, went to meet the lady, who was already in the middle of the dormitory near to where the lamp was hanging ; he fell at her feet ; and, though he had already recognized her, yet he besought her to tell him who she was. She replied : ‘ I am she whom you invoke every

evening ; and when you say, *Eia ergo, advocata nostra*, I prostrate before my Son for the preservation of this Order.' Then the blessed Dominic inquired who were the two young maidens who accompanied her, and she answered : ' One is Cecilia and the other Catharine. The blessed Dominic asked again why she had passed over one of the Brethren without blessing him, and he was told, ' Because he was not in a fitting posture.' Then, having finished her round and sprinkled the rest of the Brethren, she disappeared." When the heavenly vision had faded from his sight, our Holy Father returned to pray in the place where he was before, and then it was that he had the consolation of beholding his religious safely lodged beneath our Lady's mantle, as related in a previous chapter.

Nor were our dormitories deprived of the presence of heavenly visitants after St. Dominic had gone to his reward. A novice of Santa Sabina rose one night and sat at the foot of his bed to pray ; and, as he did so, he heard steps passing through the corridor ; and, turning to see who it was, he beheld three figures in the dress of the Order, whom he imagined to be Friars. One of them carried a cross, another a vessel of holy water, and the third an asperges brush. He thought it was the Prior and two of the Brethren, for, probably in memory of the vision of our Lady just mentioned, it was the custom for one or more of the Friars to go through the convent, particularly the dormitory, sprinkling every part of it. Fearing, therefore, to be observed, he withdrew to his bed. When the supposed Friars came near him, he heard one say to another, " We have chased all the demons away from the dormitory ; who will go to the other offices ?" And the other replied : " Our Lord has sent other angels to those places ;

this only belongs to us." Then they disappeared, and the novice knew that they were God's angels. For, indeed, as their words indicated, the dormitories were sometimes visited by other than heavenly spirits.

The readers of the Life of St. Dominic will remember how one night, as he was guarding his flock with the vigilance of a good shepherd, he met the enemy in the dormitory, going about like a lion seeking whom he might devour ; and, recognizing him, he said : " Thou evil beast, what dost thou here ?" " I do my office," replied the demon, " and attend to my gains." " And what gains dost thou make in the dormitory ?" asked the Saint. " Gain enough," returned the demon. " I disquiet the Friars in many ways ; for, first, I take the sleep away from those who desire to sleep in order that they may rise promptly for Matins ; and then I give an excessive heaviness to others, so that, when the bell sounds, either from weariness or idleness they do not rise ; or, if they rise and go to choir, it is unwillingly, and they say their Office without devotion." An almost similar incident is recorded in the life of St. Agnes of Montepulciano, to which we have already referred in speaking of the chapter of faults.

Our holy Father was not the only one to witness the presence of our Lady in the dormitory. Blessed Jordan relates that he met her, accompanied by a multitude of the heavenly host, coming through the corridor, visiting and saluting the Brethren, and teaching them how they should behave. A certain Sister of the Order, who was confined to her bed through sickness, persisted, nevertheless, in rising to recite Matins of the Blessed Virgin with the others. The Prioress endeavoured to persuade her to remain in bed. " Oh, Mother, if you only knew !" she



repeated. "If I only knew what?" asked the Prioress. "If you only knew who was there!" she replied. "Our Blessed Lady is always there when we say her Office, standing at the end of the dormitory."

Nor does St. Dominic himself cease to exercise his old office of guardian and watcher over his sleeping children, as appears from an incident which occurred in the Convent of our Lady of Zamora in Spain. A terrible flood had broken on the monastery during the night, and the dormitory was already half deluged, when the sleeping Sisters were roused by their holy Patriarch, who appeared in the corridor and called on them to save themselves. They rose, but were too much confused by alarm and surprise to know what to do. In this emergency the house would soon have been completely flooded but for the assistance of the Saint, who cleared the passage, emptying the water with a bucket, and so saved both the house and Sisters from the threatened danger.

A visitor whose presence must be reckoned as second only to that of our Lady and St. Dominic is our dear and holy Mother, St. Catharine of Siena, whom Blessed Lucy of Narni saw standing at the door of the dormitory, as if, to use the words of her biographer, "the house had been her own." Lucy prostrated at her feet, and begged her to bless the monastery, to which the Saint willingly consented, and they went through the house together, singing the *Ave Maris Stella* and sprinkling the cells with holy water.

The Constitutions enjoin that there should always be an altar in the dormitory in honour of the Blessed Virgin, our most compassionate Advocate and Lady, and here the lamp is kept burning throughout the night; and the first General Chapter of the Order, held in the lifetime of St. Dominic, ordered that each cell should contain a

crucifix and an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. There is an allusion to the first of these ordinances in Blessed Raymond of Capua's Life of St. Catharine. At the time of the Saint's death, which took place in Rome on Sunday, April 29, 1380, Raymond was at the Convent of Genoa, preparing to start for Bologna, where the Chapter was about to be held at which he was elected Master General of the Order. "The same morning that the blessed Catharine expired," he says, "I had gone to the church to celebrate the festival of St. Peter Martyr. After saying Mass, I again went up to the dormitory to prepare my little bundle for our intended journey, when, passing by the image of our Blessed Lady which stood in the dormitory, I said an *Ave Maria* softly after the manner of our religious, and remained kneeling there for a few minutes. At that moment I heard a voice . . . which spoke or at least presented to my mind these words: 'Fear not, I am here for thy sake; I am in heaven for thee. I will protect and defend thee; be tranquil; fear nothing; I am here for thee.'" At first Blessed Raymond could only attribute these words to our Blessed Lady, whom he was in the act of saluting; but, when he received the news of the death of St. Catharine, he understood them to have been words of consolation and encouragement addressed to him by her who had been at once his mother and spiritual daughter.

We read a pretty story in connection with the dormitory altar in the life of Sister Raphael of Faenza. She was Prioress of the Convent at Prato, A.D. 1512, when the territory of Tuscany was exposed to all the horrors of war. The town of Prato was taken by the enemy, and the usual violence that accompanies the termination of a siege was exercised against the unhappy citizens. A great number of religious took refuge in the convent over which

Sister Raphael presided ; and she conducted them, together with her own community, to the church, where, committing themselves to the protection of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, they listened with unspeakable horror to the sound of the wild mob who, bursting into the house, ran through every part of it seeking for their victims. The soldiers were led on by three ruffians, one of whom was an apostate friar and the worst of men ; and so they pursued their way, cursing and blaspheming, till, coming to the dormitory, John the apostate heard his own name called. Looking whence the voice proceeded, they were all struck with terror when they perceived that it was the image of the Madonna that addressed him. They prostrated on the ground to listen, whilst the voice commanded them to beware how they raised a hand against the religious of that house, whom they must protect against the violence of their soldiers. The three Captains rose from the ground, and mutually pledged themselves to defend the nuns from insult even at the risk of their own lives. Nor did they fail to redeem their promise. John returned to his Order, and made a holy end. When he was asked the reason why he smiled so joyously as he lay at the point of death, " It is," he replied, " because I am thinking of what the Blessed Virgin promised me in the dormitory of Prato ;" and so saying he breathed his last.

It will be observed that in the early days of the Order separate cells did not exist ; and even when introduced they were at first of a different and less private construction than is usual at the present day. The law obliging every religious to have a separate cell dates from the Council of Trent. Previous to that time we find frequent allusions to the common dormitory, in which all slept together ; and the erection of separate cells was in some cases treated as

an innovation and breach of discipline. Thus in the life of Sister Delitia of Palermo, the great reformer of her day, we find Cardinal Doria commanding all the cells to be pulled down and the primitive use of the common dormitory to be restored, a reform vigorously resisted by the community, until Delitia as vigorously set to work on her own cell first, and soon laid its partition on the ground, and so went on until she had carried out the Cardinal's commands, for which she had to suffer no small persecution from the rest of the Sisters. The cells contemplated by the decrees of the Council were, however, to be emphatically poor cells; and we find incidental expressions in the lives of our Saints which show us what kind of appearance they presented; as, for instance, when we are told of one of the Brethren that nothing was found in his cell after his death except his straw bed and his instruments of penance. But enough has already been said on this subject in the chapter on Poverty.

If the rule which prescribes a hard bed should ever seem distasteful to nature, a glance at what was practised by some of our religious with regard to their beds may make us blush for our own degeneracy. St. Rose on her hard logs interspersed with broken glass and earthenware, Blessed Benvenuta on the damp earth with only a stone for a pillow, and others far too numerous to be named whose only couch was the altar-step, where they took the scanty rest which nature demanded after long vigils of prayer and penance, these and such as these may well make us feel the hard mattress allowed by the rule to be something more like luxury than austerity.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HAPPY DEATHS OF THE RELIGIOUS OF OUR ORDER

THERE is one privilege which the historians and biographers of the Dominican Order are accustomed to claim as in some sort the special privilege of its members ; it is that of a happy death. In this, no doubt, there is a touch of that excusable partiality which every soldier feels for the regiment in which he serves, and from which even spiritual men are not exempt. We call it excusable because, in point of fact, it is but natural that we should be more familiar with the graces and beauties of our own religious annals than with those of other Orders, and that we should thus fall into the error of supposing them exclusively our own. However that may be, it is certain that a volume of marvellous beauty might be compiled on the deaths of Dominican religious. Nor is it strange that the children of the Rosary, whose spiritual life is in so large a way coloured by that inspired devotion, should in their last moments be specially helped by her whom in life they have countless times invoked for assistance *nunc et in hora mortis nostræ*. A happy death is, moreover, in some sense the special grace of the religious life. They who have renounced all earthly satisfaction must not be deemed mercenary if they look to the reward. The sacrifices and labours of many years, and all that makes up that cross which a religious takes up cheerfully and daily, do but point to the supreme moment when all

shall be repaid, and when the departing soul shall hear those sweet and gracious words, the reality of which is so soon to be before her: "May Jesus Christ appear to thee with a mild and festive countenance, and order thee a place amongst those who are to stand before Him for ever."

The deaths described in almost every page of our Chronicles are not merely holy deaths; they are characterized by a singular joy and sweetness. Michael Pio gives a long list of the happy deaths of the Brethren of France. Many of them died singing. There was Father John of Gascony, who sang the responsory of Compline just before his death—*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum, Alleluia, Alleluia. Redemisti me Domine Deus veritatis, Alleluia, Alleluia*—and expired as he uttered the last *Alleluia*. Blessed William of Avignon had all his life enjoyed special familiarity with the angels; and these holy spirits waited around his death-bed with a kind of impatience for the moment of his release. One of them even drew near and kissed him as a pledge of his certain glory. "When Sister Mary of the Holy Spirit [A.D. 1592] felt her last moments approach," says Marchese, "she showed much joy, and begged one of her Sisters, who was very intimate with her, and who was a great singer, to celebrate this happy day of her heavenly nuptials with a little music." "What shall I sing?" asked her friend. "The *Pange lingua*," she replied; and as the words of the beautiful hymn were chanted, she joined in them as best she could, and expired with the last stanza on her lips. Lewis of Bergamo, Bishop of Mantua (A.D. 1469), after having received the last Sacraments, was seen surrounded by a bright light, and at the moment he expired a voice was heard uttering the words, "Well

done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord." To Conrad of Germany the day and hour of his death had been revealed; and, as the longed-for moment drew near, he began very sweetly to chant the 149th Psalm, *Cantate Domino canticum novum*. Then he closed his eyes, and the Brethren believed him to be at the point of death; but presently he opened his eyes again and intoned the *Dominus vobiscum*. The Brethren answered, *Et cum spiritu tuo*, and he added the *Fidelium*. Then the community recited the Gradual Psalms, and at the words, *Hæc requies mea*, he lifted his arms to heaven as though he beheld some grand and beautiful sight, and, with a smile of infinite sweetness, passed to the presence of God.

Sister Maximilla of Lecce (A.D. 1652) was a great singer, and, when dying, was observed beating time on her bed as though accompanying music. The Sisters asked her what she was doing. "I can no longer sing with my lips," she answered, "but in my heart I am singing to Jesus and Mary." Father Melchior (A.D. 1602), who was Cantor of the convent in which he lived, recited the Litany and prayers used in the commendation of the soul, and at length intoned in a most musical voice the Responsory *Subvenite*, the community continuing it; and, before it was finished, he breathed his last. Cantors and Chantresses seem to have retained the love of their calling to the last. We read of one Sister who had been an eminent Chantress, and was well skilled in rubrics and the sacred ceremonies, that she was disturbed on her deathbed by hearing another Sister give out a hymn to the wrong tone, and gently corrected her, saying, "The Easter tone, Sister," and so died.

Some of the stories of the composure manifested by

those to whom the time of their death had been revealed are very amusing. The Brethren at Lisbon, for instance, were one day roused in alarm by hearing the *tremola* or signal by which it is customary to summon the community to a deathbed. Hastening along the dormitory, they found one of the Fathers vigorously sounding the little instrument with great apparent unconcern. "Who is dying, Father Dionysius?" they asked. "I am," he replied, "and I desire Extreme Unction as soon as may be." They thought that he had lost his reason; but he repeated that he was dying, and, going to bed, expired that night.

Sister Agnes Pacifica, who made her profession A.D. 1533, was warned of her approaching death by the apparition of several Sisters who had lately died in the convent, who invited her to come and join them. A few hours before she expired, being still in perfect health, she busied herself with all necessary preparations. She got ready a bed in the infirmary, and as far as possible arranged for her burial. Then she went to the Prioress to ask leave to die; but the latter, being engaged at the time, dismissed her, bidding her come again, to which she quietly replied, "I scarcely think there will be time, dear Mother." She next betook herself to the kitchen and gave away her portion to the poor, and at length went to bed; and the Prioress was only warned just in time to cause the last Sacraments to be administered.

Father Calbert of Savoy, after preaching for twenty years throughout Piedmont, at length came to the little town of Aquabella, where long before he had said his first Mass. It was revealed to him that there also he should on the following day say his last. He therefore



prepared the altar, and, before celebrating, turned to the people, praying them to make all things ready for his burial, for he was about to depart. When he had finished Mass, he made them bring the holy oils, and received Extreme Unction, himself making the responses, after which he immediately and happily expired.

Castiglio has a beautiful story about the death of one of the Fathers of Vicenza, which we will give at length. This Father was a man of singular virtue and humility, learned and devout, specially to our Blessed Lady, of whose praise he always spoke whenever he preached ; indeed, it seemed as though his tongue could never be satisfied with the repetition of her sweet name. Preaching once in a certain village, he was taken ill ; and, being carried to the hospital, he was seized with profound melancholy, so that those about him thought that that alone would have killed him. He sighed, he wept, he lamented over his sins ; and so he went on up to within a few hours of his death, when all his grief and sadness were changed into joy, and he appeared as if in ecstasy. Speaking to the glorious Virgin, whom he doubtless saw at that moment, he exclaimed : “ O Lady of my soul, thou art very welcome, but what have I done to deserve this at thy hands, I who am nothing but thy poor chaplain and preacher ? ” Then, after a pause, he sang the verse : “ Thou, O Lady, didst appear to Theophilus the apostate,” etc., with the Antiphon : “ Let the choirs of angels rejoice with Mary,” etc. Then turning to his companion, he said, “ Dear Brother, these are not dreams nor delusions of sickness, still less hypocrisy ; but it is impossible for me to cease singing the praises of the Mother of God.” Then, the hour of Matins being come, the good Brother began to recite them ; and,

having reached the last verse of the Psalms of Lauds, *Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum*, the sick man raised his head and hands, and repeated the verse many times with singular jubilation, *Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum*, "Let every spirit praise the Lord"; and so died.

Blessed Romeo of Catalonia had been noted through life for his singular devotion to our Lady, and had been wont to console himself in all his troubles by the repetition of the verse: "When He shall give sleep to His beloved; behold the inheritance of the Lord are children: the reward, the fruit of the womb" (*Ps. cxxvi. 2, 3*), referring, of course, to the blessed fruit of Mary's womb Who would one day be the reward of all his labours. Now it chanced that, when he came to die, one of the Fathers failed to hear the signal summoning the community to the commendation of his soul, but was presently awakened by a sweet voice, singing that verse in his cell: *Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum; ecce hæreditas Domini filii, merces fructus ventris*. He rose at once, and, hastening to join the others in the infirmary, found that the holy man had that moment expired.

When the news was brought to Father Serafino Capponi (A.D. 1536-1614) that he was dying, he pronounced the words *Benedictus Deus*, and presently asked the Brethren standing round his bed as a great favour once more to sing the *Salve Regina* for him. As they did so, he listened with joy and reverence, removing, as well as his weakness would allow, a little cap which he was accustomed to wear. When all the prayers were finished, he placidly made the sign of the cross, kissed the crucifix, and expired. Whilst his body was being carried from the infirmary to the chapter-room to the chant of the *Libera*, another religious, lying sick in his cell, heard the procession pass the door; but the voices

were singing, not the usual funeral chant, but the canticle *Te Deum* and the words *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus*.

Beatrice of the Cross (A.D. 1622) was distinguished through life for her intense devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament and to our Blessed Lady, as well as for her profound humility. As she lay sick in the infirmary of her convent at Lisbon, she one day heard the most entrancing music, at a time when she knew the community were in the refectory. Much astonished, but not the least suspecting anything supernatural, she concluded that they were practising for Matins ; and, turning to her aunt, Mother Mary of the Cross, who was sitting beside her, she remarked with a smile : " The Chantress is preparing her lesson early to-day." On leaving the refectory the community went to choir as usual to finish the Grace, and in their turn heard the same sweet music, which was a still greater surprise to them than it had been to the sick Sister. About two o'clock that same afternoon Sister Beatrice was suddenly taken much worse, and expired almost immediately. Then the others understood that God had sent His angels to honour with heavenly melodies the death of this Angel of the Tabernacle.

A certain Conrad, Prior of the Convent of Constance, had a singularly joyous death. " He had ever," says Castiglio, " been of great humility, meekness and devotion, and marvellously patient in bearing long sickness." During his last illness he had these words continually in his mouth : " My Beloved to me, and I to Him ; until the day break and the shadows retire " (*Cant.* ii. 16, 17). He said these words continually with a certain joy, as if of Paradise, a joy that seemed wholly to belong to Heaven and to have nothing to do with this valley of tears. Finding himself at his last hour, he addressed the religious who stood around him,

and said, " Dear Brothers, I die in faith and in friendship, in confidence and in joy : in faith, because I die in the firm belief in Jesus Christ and in the Sacraments of His Church ; in friendship, for from the hour wherein I put on the holy habit I have been preserved in grace, and have striven to please the Majesty of God ; in confidence, for I know that to die is to live, and that I am going to the house of my Lord ; and in joy, because I know that this hour is but the passage from sorrow and tears to laughter, from labour to repose." And after he had so spoken, with the same tranquillity as though he had been in perfect health, he received the Holy Viaticum. But first he joined his hands, saying these words : " This is my God, and I will glorify Him. O my soul, behold here God thy Saviour, receive Him joyfully, for He is thy sweet Friend, thy wise Counsellor, and thy powerful Helper." Then he asked for the general absolution of his faults from the Provincial, Father Reginald, and begged him to assign him his death as a penance for all his sins ; and, this having been granted him, he said : " Now I feel very well. Save Thy servant, O Lord, who hopes in Thee ;" and he repeated the prayer, *Fidelium Deus omnium conditor*, etc., and so died, proving that the death of the just is nothing else but a tranquil falling asleep.

Maria Mendoza (A.D. 1575) begged to have the Responsory *O spem miram* in honour of our Holy Father St. Dominic sung to her whilst dying ; and, after that, the Responsory for Maundy Thursday, *In monte Oliveti*, etc. ; and, at the words, " Not as I will, but as Thou wilt," she bowed her head and expired. Father Benedict of Sarandiglia when on his deathbed called for a little image of our Lady, which he tenderly embraced, and died repeating the words, *Monstra te esse matrem*.

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At the death of Father Martin of Santaren, so great a light was seen proceeding from his face that it illuminated the whole room, and the Prior was able by it to read all the office out of the Processional.

St. Antoninus, in his last sickness, kept continually exclaiming, "To serve God is to reign;" and these words of his, being repeated to his former novice, the apostate Anthony Neyrot of Rivoli, were the means of bringing him to repentance and encouraging him to win the martyr's crown (A.D. 1460).

It would be impossible to give a list of those who were favoured in their last moments by the visible presence of saints and angels and of the Immaculate Mother of God; but the account of the death of Ulric of Friesland (A.D. 1236), a death said to have been caused solely by excess of love, is too beautiful to be omitted. Returning to himself after an ecstasy in which his face and whole person had been radiant as the sun, he was commanded by his Prior to give an account of what had passed during his rapture, and he acknowledged that he had received an assurance of his future glory. On the following day, calling the infirmarian, he said, "Dear Brother, do me the charity to adorn our cell a little, for I am expecting a visit from some distinguished guests." At the hour of Tierce he caused the Brethren to be summoned, although indeed he suffered no illness save that love which little by little was consuming him. As all prostrated according to custom, reciting the Litany, he raised his right hand, saying, "Fathers, retire a little, and give place; for the King of angels is present in this cell; and here, too, is His Virgin Mother;" and a few moments after this he said: "Here are St. Paul and St. Dominic, and the holy Virgins Catharine, Agnes, and Agatha;" and so he went on, naming all those who

had come to take him to glory. The religious remained prostrate in great awe in the presence of that celestial company, and Ulric held sweet and rapturous intercourse with his heavenly guests until the bell rang for Tierce. At that signal he breathed his last, and went, as we may well believe, to share their happiness before the throne of God.

Marchese gives a touching account of the death of a virgin of the Third Order, aged only fourteen, whose name has not been preserved, and who appears, like Blessed Ulric, to have died of the pure effects of Divine love. Being at prayer in her oratory on Christmas Eve, our Lady appeared to her and placed the Infant Jesus in her arms. "My Spouse," said the Holy Child, "how much dost thou love Me?" She repeated the words of St. Peter, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." "But how much?" again inquired our Lord. "More than myself," she replied. "And dost thou really love Me?" again asked her Divine interrogator. "Yes, yes," she repeated, "I love Thee, and Thou knowest it, more than my heart or my life." "And how much more than thy heart?" was again the question. "I know not how to answer Thee, Lord; but my heart shall speak," was her reply; and so great was the force of the love that could find no expression that her heart broke. She was found in a dying state on the floor of her oratory, having just life enough left to relate what had happened.

The death of Blessed Imelda, caused by an ecstasy of joy and love at the moment of her First Communion, has been related in a former chapter. Of a similar character was the death of three Polish Friars of the Convent of Cracow, who had all received the habit on the same day, and who were all found dead in their stalls in the choir on Maundy

Thursday after Holy Communion. In spite of the innocence and sanctity of their lives, this extraordinary and unlooked for death was regarded as a judgment of God in punishment of an unworthy reception of the most Holy Sacrament, and the three bodies were therefore laid in unhallowed ground. But in three successive apparitions they threatened the Prior with the vengeance of God if Christian burial were not given to their remains. "For," said they, "we are not lost, as you and others falsely imagine; on the contrary, as soon as our souls were loosed from the body, they were united to the angelic choirs, our death having been caused by a transport of contrition and Divine love." Their bodies were accordingly removed to the chapel of the Holy Rosary, where their sanctity was attested by many miracles.

There is scarcely a more beautiful story in the Chronicles of the Order than that of Blessed Bernard of Morlaas and his novices of the Convent of Santaren in Portugal. This holy man was a native of Gascony, and exercised the office of sacristan in his convent. He also taught some of the children of the nobility living in the neighbourhood. Amongst these there were two in particular, who, according to the custom of the time, wore from devotion the habit and tonsure of the Order, for which they were probably destined, though, on account of their tender years, they continued to return at night to their homes. Whilst their holy teacher was discharging his duties about the church, the two boys were accustomed to prepare their lessons in one of the chapels, where was an altar with the statue of our Lady bearing the Holy Child in her arms. Here also they used to eat the food they had brought with them, sitting on the altar-step. In their childlike simplicity

they one day invited the Divine Babe to come and share their meal ; and lo ! in answer to their invitation, Jesus descended from His Mother's knee and came and sat beside them. Day after day and week after week the miraculous favour was renewed. The children spoke of it to their parents, who naturally attached no credit to their words, imagining the story to be a pretence for securing a more abundant supply of food. But Blessed Bernard, who knew the innocence and holiness of his little pupils, formed a different judgment, and hearing them complain that their Divine Guest never brought any contribution to the meal and never invited them in return, he bade them, next time the Holy Child should condescend to come to them, ask Him to let them sup with Him in His Father's house. Accordingly, on the first of the Rogation days, when our Lord had come as usual to share their repast, they proffered their request. " Your petition is a very just one," replied the Divine Child, " and I now invite you to a solemn banquet in My Father's house in three days' time." The children hastened to carry the good tidings to their teacher, who charged them to return to the statue and say to the Holy Child that it was not according to the custom of the Order for novices to go out unaccompanied by their Master, and that therefore he begged to be included in the invitation. On receiving a favourable answer to his request, he began with unspeakable joy of heart to prepare for his approaching end. When Ascension Day came he offered the Holy Sacrifice at the very altar where these heavenly feasts had taken place, and gave Holy Communion to the favoured little ones. Mass being over, he knelt down between them to await the summons



to the heavenly banquet; and there all three were found kneeling lifeless, with eyes and hands raised to heaven, when the community came from dinner. This wonderful event is believed to have taken place A.D. 1277; and steps are at the present time being taken to procure the solemn beatification of Blessed Bernard and his novices.

In the following century, on Whit Sunday, about A.D. 1350, an almost precisely similar occurrence is recorded to have taken place in the Convent of Majorca in the case of one novice and his master, whose names have not been preserved.

A special interest to ourselves of course attaches to any stories belonging to the English Province; and fortunately we have records of some singularly happy deaths which took place in our own country in the early days of the Order. In the Convent of Norwich a brother of the name of Walter, a youth of great promise, lay in his agony, and the community were reciting Psalms and Litanies around him, when he said: "Brethren, our Lord Jesus Christ has visited me, and shown me a magnificent place where I heard the harmonious song of the Virgins who follow Him and His most sweet Mother, and I was greatly comforted." And presently he added: "Nothing can now make me fear, for I lean on the true faith, and I have committed myself wholly to the Blessed Virgin Mary." Then, bidding farewell to the Brethren, he began to ponder on the sweet name of Mary, and so fell asleep in the Lord.

Another English Friar had often feared during life that he should not receive the reward of a preacher, because he had been unable to proclaim the Word of

God ; nevertheless he had always been willing to go as companion with those who exercised that sacred function. On his deathbed he was consoled by a vision of Saints clothed in white and walking processionally, two and two, whilst one resplendent crown hung over the heads of every pair. Thus he was given to understand that a reward is granted, not to the preacher only, but to his companion also.

A young Friar, belonging to the Convent of Derby, and who in the Chronicles is recorded to have borne the very un-English name of Ruffolo, had gone on business to some neighbouring town, where he fell sick and was charitably received by the Franciscan Fathers, as there was no convent of his own Order in the place. As he lay dying on the Whit Sunday of 1257, he was seen to laugh. "Why do you laugh?" asked the bystanders. "Because," he replied, "our glorious King St. Edmund\* has just entered with such a numerous company of angels that the cell is quite full of them." Then, with yet greater signs of rejoicing, he exclaimed : "Here is our Lady ; let us salute her ;" and he began the *Salve Regina*. The Dominican and Franciscan Fathers who were present prostrated on the ground as they continued the Antiphon. When it was ended, the sick man said : "Oh, how dear is our salutation to her ; she smiles graciously on us all, and salutes us in return." But presently a change came over him, and he looked grave and sad. "Behold," he said, "our Lord Christ is about to judge me ;" and then he shook from head to foot, as if in great fear, and his whole body was bathed in sweat. Placed before the Supreme

\* *Il nostro glorioso Rè Santo Himondo.*

Judge, it seemed as if he were answering questions put to him ; sometimes he said : " That is true ;" at other times : " Not so," and then he prayed the Queen of Heaven to plead his cause and courageously resisted the false accusations of the enemy. At length they heard him say : " My most compassionate Redeemer, pardon at least that fault, for it was small." " How is this, dear Brother ?" they said ; " are such trifling faults judged at the great tribunal ?" " Even so," he replied, " great and little are punished there." " Nevertheless," said they, " do not despond, but trust in the mercy of God." He smiled once more and said, " He is indeed merciful, and I know it well ; for I have tasted of His mercy ;" and so expired.

A beautiful account is left us of the death, in times not quite so remote from our own, of Sister Antonia Howard, the first Englishwoman who took the habit of our Holy Father after the so-called Reformation, and who is said by Tournon to have been sister to the celebrated Dominican Cardinal of that name, though by the unpublished manuscript memoirs of the community of Vilvorde, now settled at Carisbrooke in the Isle of Wight, it would not appear that she was so nearly related to him. She had received the habit when only sixteen ; and, to quote from the manuscript to which we have alluded, " a short time of her noviceship passed, when it pleased God to try her with a grievous sickness ; and He rewarded her virtuous intentions and fervent desires to be consecrated to him in holy religion with a clear sight of His sacred Mother, the ever-blessed Virgin, about an hour before her happy death, which took place on October 8, A.D. 1661, four months after she took the holy habit." After some particulars

of her illness, the account continues as follows: "A little while after she fell into a trance, in which for about a quarter of an hour she appeared quite dead; then, smiling, she opened her eyes with signs of great joy, and presently after fell into another trance, which lasted not so long, but the signs of joy and satisfaction far exceeded what she had shown before. This moved the father-confessor to ask her the cause of her joy, to which she made no reply, but looked upon him and us that were by her very cheerfully, and made some signs with her hand which we could not understand. Then her confessor, much surprised to see this strange satisfaction, so very unusual at such a time, said thus to her: 'Child, I command you, in virtue of holy obedience, to declare the cause of your joy at this dreadful time, when you are going to give a strict account of every thought, word, and deed, which God exacts with such severity that the greatest Saints have trembled to think of it.' She, without any change of countenance, answered: 'I see it.' 'Child,' said the Father, 'have a care what you say; do you see our Blessed Lady?' She very cheerfully replied: 'Yes, I do see our Blessed Lady with a fine crown and rosary. O fine crown! O fine rosary! I desire to see no more of this world.' Then the confessor, Father William Collings, said to her: 'Child, would you have the absolution of the Rosary?' She answered: 'I made signs for it many times when I could not speak.' Then, devoutly preparing herself to receive it, he gave it to her; and, presently after, with a pleasant, smiling countenance, she left this wretched life to pass to eternal felicity." She was professed on her deathbed.

We find one notice of the custom which prevails in

the Order of reciting the *Credo* aloud when summoned to the infirmary for the commendation of the departing souls. One of our Sisters fell into her agony somewhat unexpectedly whilst the community were at table, and would have died without the assistance of their prayers, had not their attention been aroused by sounds as of a number of persons hastening along the corridors and reciting the *Credo*. The Sisters hurried out of the refectory but could see no one, and, proceeding to the infirmary, they found the sick Sister at the point of death.

The most characteristic feature about the deaths of religious of the Order is the use of verses from the Office which rose naturally to the lips so long accustomed to recite them. Among these none recur so frequently as the Compline Responsory, *In manus tuas*, and the verse, *Maria Mater gratiæ*, which one Brother persisted in repeating in spite of the suggestion of another who desired him to say rather the *Gloria tibi, Domine*. "I know very well what I am about," said the dying man. "Mary, the Queen of Heaven, is even now at my bed's head."

*Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi: in domum Domini ibimus*, "I have rejoiced at the things which were said unto me; we will go into the house of the Lord," were the last words of Blessed Margaret of Savoy (A.D. 1382-1464).

Sister Anne Augustine (A.D. 1560), when dying, smiled as she gazed upwards, saying: "O Sisters, if you could see what I see! Oh, what joy! what joy!" The joy and sweetness expressed on the countenance of Antoinette of St. Hyacinth so deceived the community, that they were nearly refusing her the Sacraments, for

they could not believe her to be dying. Sister Cecilia Garcia, when told that she was in danger of death, began to laugh. Sister Carità (A.D. 1515) in like manner could not contain her joy, but kissed all her Sisters, taking leave of them as though she were going home. So, too, of many others we read that they died laughing. Some sang the *Te Deum*, like Isabella of our Lady; others the *Credo*. Others again, who during life had been tormented with scruples and fear of death, expired full of tranquil hope. Sister Sophia sang continually during her last moments, and died laughing; and Theodora of Landi repeated with sweet smiles the words: "I have been, I am, and I shall ever be with Christ."

Many, however, suffered terrible anguish before their last hour, like our seraphic Mother, St. Catharine, and others, to whom the judgments of God were revealed in an unusually terrible manner; but in all these cases the anguish gave place before death to perfect calm. Magdalen Orsini endured a great storm of temptation just before death, and strengthened herself to endure it by the repetition of verses from the *Benedictus*. At last she cried: "Victory, victory!" and again: *Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum*; "Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Many died a death of love. Of a certain Sister Cecilia it is said that the organ of the Church sounded of its own accord at her death; and it would be impossible to reckon the number of those at whose deathbeds and funerals angelic choirs attended. The angels not only sang beside the dying bed of Sister Maria Atayda (A.D. 1525), but also recited the Litanies, some

intoning the invocations, and others giving the response, *Ora pro ea*; whilst at the death of Blessed Zedmira they sang the anthem, *Veni Sponsa Christi*.

A very remarkable favour was granted to Blessed Mary of the Purification, who was tormented towards the close of her last sickness by a burning fever. Turning to a crucifix, "O my Lord!" she exclaimed, "give me one drop of Thy blood to cool my tongue"; and at these words the crucifix was seen to bend down to her lips; and, when the Sisters endeavoured to remove it, they found her dead. She had literally breathed forth her soul into the open side of her Redeemer.

These are but a very few of the many stories preserved to us concerning the last hours of the religious of our Order; for others, equally touching and beautiful, we have but to open the Lives of our Saints or to turn over the pages of our Chronicles.

And now our labour of love is ended. The instances we have quoted in this little book are but samples of what may be found in the biographies of our Brethren and Sisters, in which is set before us a perfect realisation of the spiritual and religious life. Everything is to be found there; nor can we imagine a difficulty or a scruple which cannot be solved by a study of those precious volumes. Some of the examples set before us may seem to call us to hard and painful things; if so, we must animate ourselves with the remembrance of our vocation. As the "Militia of Jesus Christ" we must encounter some hardships in following our "Chief and Leader, Dominic," even as he walked in the footsteps of his suffering Lord and Master.

The Antiphon of his Office is ever ringing in our ears ; and we can use no higher, nobler words wherewith to encourage fainting hearts :—

“ The poor man passes to the royal throne, the chief to his sceptre, the conqueror to his reward. Death gives place to life, labour to repose ; and the weeping of this present life is exchanged for everlasting joy.”



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